

'Abd Allah IBN SABA
Myth Exploded

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

Abd Allah Ibn Saba Myth Exploded

:Writer

Toyib Olawuyi

:Published in print

London

:Digital Publisher

Ghaemiyeh center of computerized researches

Contents

Abd Allah Ibn Saba Myth Exploded

BOOK ID

Author(s): Toyib Olawuyi

Category: Early Islamic History Miscellaneous information: Abd Allah Ibn Saba Myth ,Exploded

.Author: Toyib Olawuyi

Person Tags: Abd Allah Ibn Saba

point

This text carefully examines and refutes the claims of Ahlul Sunnah about Abd Allah .Ibn Saba

Dedication

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

محمد نبينا

بنوره هادينا

من مكه حبيبى نوره

سطع فى المدينه

This research is dedicated to my beloved master, ‘Ammar b. Yasir, the noble ,companion of the Messenger of Allah and Amir al-Muminin

alaihima al-salam‘

.may Allah be pleased with him and his blessed parents ,

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to Tural Islam, Aneela Sultan, Ali Baker, Ahmad Olawuyi, Sa'dudeen Mahmud (Alfa Tira), Lukman Ibrahim, and the following brothers and sisters, for their encouragement: Shaykh Muhammad Nura Dass, Shaykh Muhibullah 'Ali, Shaykh Abu Bakr Bello Salati, Waheed Afolabi, Dr. 'Abdullateef Saliu, Mikail Zakariyah, Ra'ouf Ali-Zadeh, Jafar Mer, Steve Davies, Jaffer Abbas, Jibreel Ibn Mikael, Muhammad Ali Khalil, Ahmed Hakim, Hassan Bokhari, Syed Jarry Haider, Omidiji Nurudeen, Ibrahim Olasunkonmi Bello, Kassim Agbonika Salihu, Ilani Abubakar, Mounir Bahsoun, Kamal Ishmael, Bilal Bernard Nolan, Dylan Esteban, Aquib Mehdi Rizvi, Syed Ali Raza, Sajjad Abu Ja'far Baktash, Radwan Hamoud, Akram Abbas, Ali Hussnain, Nader Carun, Henna Rai, Rizziandrie Zairul, Nasir Hasan, Sayed Umaar Kazmi, and Hussain Ali Nasser. May Allah bless them all and all our loving brothers and sisters from the Shi'ah Imamiyyah and the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah.

Preface

Every Shi'i who seeks to debate a Sunni must insist on certain ten principles:

١. Both parties must swear before Allah to pursue, defend and follow

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the truth alone.

٢. Both parties must agree on a specific topic, and also set the boundaries of the discussion.

٣. Each party must declare beforehand what exactly must be proved by the other party in order to win the debate.

۴. Each side must swear before Allah to strictly stay on the topic of the debate, and not deviate, digress or venture into any other throughout the discussion.

۵. Each party must swear before Allah to present only authentically transmitted reports from both the Sunni books and the Shi'i books.

۶. The Sunni party must always present reports with reliable chains from the Shi'i

books only in order to convince the Shi'i on any point. In the same manner, the Shi'i must always present reports with reliable chains from the Sunni books in order to .convince the Sunni on any point

Authenticity of the reports is determined primarily through the chains of narration. .٧ Each party must either present the opinions of the relevant leading rijal experts on each riwayah or do a thorough rijal breakdown of its narrators using the strictest appropriate rijal standards. If either party has an objection to the authentication by the 'ulama of any particular report, he must present convincing evidence to prove .their error

The opinions of scholars on issues are not valid as proof unless reliably transmitted .٨ .evidence can be provided to back them up

It is he who claims that something exists, or that it is true, that must provide the .٩ cogent evidence for it. The party

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denying it has no obligation to provide proof of his denial. However, where the claimer has provided his proof, the onus shifts to the denier. The denier must either accept the evidence supplied, or provide solid academically sound and orthodox reasons to .reject it

There shall never be any vulgar abuse of the other party or anyone respected by .١٠ his sect or madhhab. The debate shall be entirely decorous, and the choice of words .shall be respectful

Unfortunately, not many Sunnis or Shi'is have the necessary skills or temperaments to accept all the conditions stated above. Therefore, we almost always see very poor pseudo-debates, especially on online forums. We often see each side quoting dha'if reports from even his own sources, as well as from those of the opposing party, to drive home his weak points! In most cases, no original research is ever done on the topic by either side. Rather, each of them merely copy-pastes heavily from websites

.and parrots statements by others

In the end, nothing useful is achieved from the debate. On a lot of occasions, the discussion turns into a cursing contest; and the party with the vilest tongue declares victory. It is our absolute conviction that whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing best. It is more advisable for pseudo-debaters to take time to train themselves in the necessary skills – academic and emotional – needed for a real debate before (re-)taking the podiums. The damage and evil caused by the pseudo-debates

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.outweigh any benefits that might come from them

Let us take the question of “Ibn Saba” as a case study for the ten rules above. Our :brothers from the Ahl al-Sunnah always make the following claims about him

.He was a descendant of Saba, and belonged to one of the Sabai tribes .۱

.He was a black Arab with a black slave mother .۲

.He was a Jew from Sana in Yemen .۳

.He accepted Islam during the khilafah of ‘Uthman b. ‘Affan .۴

He stirred up the public, especially the Egyptians, against ‘Uthman and caused the .۵ .latter’s bloody overthrow

He was the first to claim that ‘Ali, ‘alaihi al-salam, was the designated successor of .۶ .the Messenger of Allah, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi

He was the first to proclaim belief in al-raj’ah – that is, that the return to this world .۷ .after death by certain dead people

.He was the first to publicly criticize or revile Abu Bakr and ‘Umar .۸

.He was popularly called Ibn al-Sawda – son of the black mother .۹

۱۰. Imam ‘Ali was frustrated with him, and abused him by calling him “the black container” and also banished him to al-Madain.

۱۱. Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali b. Abi Talib saw it as legitimate to execute him for reviling Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, and would have done so had people not talked him out of the decision.

۱۲. ‘Ali burnt him (i.e. Ibn Saba) and his followers alive for calling him (i.e. ‘Ali) Allah.

Since it is the Sunni in any debate who makes these claims, the onus

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is on him to provide reliably transmitted evidence for each and every point. The Shi’i – who denies them – has no initial obligation or responsibility to bring any evidence to refute them(۱).

Normally, the question is: who exactly is the Sunni trying to convince on these matters? If he only seeks to convince his Sunni brothers, then he must present reliable riwayat from the Sunni books to back up all the points(۲). However, if his aim is only to convince the Shi’ah, in that case he has no other choice but to quote nothing but authentic Shi’i reports in support of himself.

Incidentally, there are only three reliable athar concerning Ibn Saba throughout all Shi’i books. Shaykh ‘Ali Al Muhsin has compiled the Shi’i riwayat about ‘Abd Allah b. Saba, and examined their various chains(۳), and has thus concluded:

والصحيح من تلک الروایات منحصر بثلاث روایات مرویه فی رجال الکشی,وهی تثبت وجود عبد الله بن سبأ, وأنه ادّعى الألوهیه فی أمیر المؤمنین, فأحرقه بالنار, ولا تثبت أکثر من ذلک.

The authentic from these reports are only three reports recorded in Rijal al-Kashi, and they establish the existence of ‘Abd Allah b. Saba, and that he claimed divinity for Amir al-Muminin, and that he (‘Ali) therefore burnt him (i.e. Ibn Saba) with fire. Nothing more than that is proved.(۴)

This is the first of the three reports, as quoted by Al Muhsin:

رواه الكشى أيضاً بسنده عن هشام بن سالم, قال: سمعت أبا عبد الله يقول وهو يحدِّث أصحابه بحديث عبد الله بن

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١- We must emphasize at this point that we, the Shi'ah Imamiyyah, do NOT deny the existence of 'Abd Allah b. Saba. Those of us who do that are in error, and their opinion does not bind our madhhab. It is only the Qur'an and our authentic ahadith that do that. There indeed was once a man with that name, as our sahih reports establish. However, the only statement that is true about him – from all that the Ahl al-Sunnah claim – is that he considered Amir al-Muminin to be a god. Everything else is false, as nothing else is established in any reliable Sunni or Shi'i riwayah. Absolutely nothing else at all! As such, all the political roles that the Ahl al-Sunnah have given to Ibn Saba, and all the other doctrines and beliefs that they have attributed to him, are only distortions of the true history. Meanwhile, our belief in the existence of the man, and his consideration of Imam 'Ali as a god, are based strictly and solely upon our own authentic Shi'i ahadith. As for Sunnis, they do not have a single reliable report in all their books to establish even the existence of Ibn Saba, much less all the fairytales that they have attached to him!

٢- We have seen efforts by some Sunni brothers to prove all the Sunni claims about 'Abd Allah b. Saba by mentioning the existence and doctrines of a group called al-Sabaiyyah. In their opinion, if they can prove that a sect which attributed itself to Ibn Saba existed, then they have already proved the existence of the man himself. Moreover, if they are able to establish the doctrines of this sect, then they have established the original doctrines of the man. This is however a very poor methodology, which is based upon clear logical fallacies. The fact that a group of people attribute themselves to an individual or an entity does NOT necessarily prove that he/she/it existed. Qur'an ٧:٧١ and ٥٣:١٩-٢٣ give vivid examples. Al-Lat, al-'Uzza and Manat were three Arab idols which existed only in "names". They had no real existence. A lot of the other idols are like that. However, it is possible to find people who attribute themselves to such imaginary idols, and who even spread weird legends about the idols' "achievements" and "teachings"! Besides that, it is quite possible to find people who have attributed themselves to a real being, but who do

NOT truly or accurately represent him at all. Examples of these kinds of adherents abound in our midst. For instance, there are Christians who attribute themselves to the Christ, Prophet 'Isa b. Maryam, 'alaihima al-salam. Would it be accurate to determine the existence and true doctrines of the Christ through the existence and doctrines of Christians? On a more specific note, is it correct to claim that the Christ believed in his own divinity, or that he was the Son of God, simply because Christians make these claims? Of course, that would be very wrong! In the same manner, it is wrong to try to prove the existence and doctrines of 'Abd Allah b. Saba through the claims and doctrines of al-Sabaiyyah, who attributed themselves to him. Rather, separate authentic reports must be provided to independently and directly establish .the existence of the man himself and his personal doctrines, beliefs and teachings

Ali Al Muhsin, 'Abd Allah b. Saba: Dirasat wa Tahlil (1st edition, ١٤٢٢ H), pp. ٤٥-٥٠ ‛ -٣

Ibid, p. ٤٩ -٤

سبأ وما ادّعى من الربوبيه فى أمير المؤمنين على بن أبى طالب, فقال: إنه لما ادّعى ذلك فيه استتابه أمير المؤمنين, فأبى أن يتوب فأحرقه بالنار.

Al-Kashi narrated it too with his chain from Hisham b. Salim, who said: I heard Abu 'Abd Allah saying, while addressing his companions on the issue of 'Abd Allah b. Saba and his claim of divinity for Amir al-Muminin, 'Ali b. Abi Talib: "When he made that claim concerning him, Amir al-Muminin asked him to repent. But, he refused to repent. (So, he burnt him with fire."(١

:Al Muhsin also copies the second hadith

رواه الكشى أيضاً فى كتابه المذكور بسنده عن أبان بن عثمان, قال: سمعت أبا عبد الله يقول: لعن الله عبد الله بن سبأ, إنه ادّعى الربوبيه فى أمير المؤمنين, وكان والله أمير المؤمنين عبداً لله طائعاً, الويل لمن كذب علينا, وإن قوماً يقولون فينا ما لا نقوله فى أنفسنا, نبرأ إلى الله منهم, نبرأ إلى الله منهم.

Al-Kashi records again in his mentioned book with his chain from Aban b. 'Uthman, who said: I heard Abu 'Abd Allah saying: "May Allah curse 'Abd Allah b. Saba. Verily, he claimed divinity for Amir al-Muminin. I swear by Allah, Amir al-Muminin was only an obedient slave of Allah. Woe unto whosoever lies upon us. A group say concerning us what we never say about ourselves, we dissociate ourselves from them unto Allah.

(We dissociate ourselves from them unto Allah."(٢

:And this is the third report, cited by Shaykh Al Muhsin

رواه أيضاً بسنده عن أبى حمزه الثمالى, قال:

p: ۶

Ibid, p. ۴۷ -١
Ibid -٢

قال على بن الحسين :لعن الله من كذب علينا, إنى ذكرت عبد الله بن سبأ فقامت كل شعره فى جسدى, لقد ادّعى أمراً عظيماً, ما له لعنه الله !كان على والله عبداً لله صالحاً, أخو رسول الله, ما نال الكرامه من الله إلا بطاعته لله ولرسوله, وما نال رسول الله الكرامه من الله إلا بطاعته.

:He narrated again with his chain from Abu Hamzah al-Thumali, who said

Ali b. al-Husayn said: "May Allah curse whosoever lies upon us. I remember 'Abd Allah' b. Saba, and every hair on my body rises. He made a terrible claim. What was wrong with him? May Allah curse him. I swear by Allah, 'Ali was only a righteous slave of Allah and the brother of the Messenger of Allah. He did not achieve honour from Allah except through his obedience to Allah and to His Messenger. The Messenger of Allah (too did not achieve honour from Allah except with his obedience of Him.(١

:Then, Al Muhsin comments about the three ahadith

وهذه الروايات الثلاث صحيحه السند

(These three reports have sahih chains.(٢

Any Sunni who wants to debate any Shi'i on the topic of 'Abd Allah b. Saba, la'natullah 'alaihi, can therefore only quote the three riwayat above if he is sincere. However, he would NEVER be able to establish the Sunni claims below, through those authentic :Shi'i ahadith

.Abd Allah b. Saba was a black Arab with a black mother' .١

.He was a Jew from Sana in Yemen .۲

.He accepted Islam during the khilafah of 'Uthman b. 'Affan .۳

He .۴

p: ۷

Ibid -۱

Ibid -۲

stirred up the public, especially the Egyptians, against 'Uthman and caused the .latter's bloody overthrow

He was the first to claim that 'Ali was the designated successor of the Messenger of .۵ .Allah

He was the first to proclaim belief in al-raj'ah – that is, that the Prophet will one day .۶ .return to this world after death

.He was the first to publicly criticize or revile Abu Bakr and 'Umar .۷

.He was popularly called Ibn al-Sawda – son of the black mother .۸

Imam 'Ali was frustrated with him, and abused him racially by calling him "the black .۹ .container" and also banished him to al-Madain

Amir al-Muminin 'Ali b. Abi Talib saw it as legitimate to execute him for reviling Abu .۱۰ Bakr and 'Umar, and would have done so had people not talked him out of the .decision

Therefore, our brothers from the Ahl al-Sunnah will always lose any debate on Ibn .Saba with any Shi'i as long as both sides are honest

Meanwhile, what about the Sunni sources? What if a Sunni only intended to convince another Sunni concerning 'Abd Allah b. Saba? Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. ۷۲۸ H) outlines

:the necessary rules here

و الجواب من وجوه أحدها انه لا بد من إقأمه الدليل على صحه المنقول إلا فالاستدلال بما لا تثبت

The reply is from several angles. One of them is: evidence must be presented for the authenticity of whatever is quoted. Unless this is done, using it as proof is invalid.(١)

:Elsewhere, in rejecting a report, he adds

فيقال أولا هذه الحكايه لم يذكر

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١- Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; ١st edition, ١۴٠۶ H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. ٧, p. ١٣۶

لها إسنادا فلا تعرف صحتها فإن المنقولات إنما تعرف صحتها بالأسانيد الثابته

It is said (in reply) that first and foremost, he has not mentioned any chain for this narration. Therefore, its authenticity is unknown. This is because the authenticity of quoted reports is known only through their authentic chains.(١)

:He further reiterates

ومعلوم أن من احتج فى أى مسأله كانت بشىء من النقل فلا بد أن يذكر إسنادا تقوم به الحجه

It is well-known that whosoever relies upon as proof any narration in any issue, he must mention (at least) a chain which establishes it as a hujjah (proof).(٢)

So, every Sunni must do the following with every report he mentions on 'Abd Allah b. :Saba

١. Quote the report with the full chain.

٢. Provide clear evidence for the reliability of the chain.

Interestingly, our dear Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah himself has failed completely to comply with either of the two obligatory rules in his discourses about Ibn Saba. For instance, this is his submission about how that controversial, “elusive” character mounted onto :the Islamic scene

وأما بيعه عثمان فلم يتخلف عنها أحد مع كثره المسلمين وانتشرهم من إفريقيه إلى خراسان ومن سواحل الشام إلى أقصى اليمن ومع كونهم كانوا ظاهرين على عدوهم من المشركين وأهل الكتاب يقاتلونهم وهى فى زياده فتح وانتصار ودوام دوله ودوام المسلمين على مبايعته والرضا عنه ست سنين نصف خلافته معظمين له مادحين له لا يظهر من أحد منهم التكلم فيه بسوء

ثم بعد هذا صار يتكلم فيه بعضهم وجمهورهم لا يتكلم فيه إلا بخير وكانت قد طالت عليهم إمارته فانه بقى اثنتى عشره

Ibid, vol. ٣, p. ١٣٨ -١
Ibid, vol. ۵, p. ۴٨١ -٢

سنه لم تدم خلافه أحد من الأربعه ما دامت خلافته فإن خلافه الصديق كانت سنتين وبعض الثالثه وخلافه عمر عشر سنين وبعض الأخرى وخلافه على أربع سنين وبعض الخامسه ونشأ فى خلافته من دخل فى الإسلام كرها فكان منافقا مثل ابن سبأ وأمثاله وهم الذين سعوا فى الفتنه بقتله

As for the bay’ah of ‘Uthman, there was no one who did not pledge it despite the great number of the Muslims and their spread from Africa to Khurasan (in Iran, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan), and from the plains of Syria to the remotest places of Yemen. This was also despite their victories over their enemies, such as the idolaters and the Ahl al-Kitab who fought them. This was accompanied by conquests and the survival of the state and the survival of the Muslims; and they (i.e. the Muslims) followed him and were pleased with him for six years – which was half of the period of his khilafah. They showed great respect to him, and praised him. There was not a .single one of them who criticized him

Then, after this, appeared those who criticized him. Yet, the majority of them did not talk about him except in good terms. However, his rule had gotten too long for them, for it lasted twelve years. The khilafah of none of the four (rightly guided khalifahs) lasted as long as his khilafah. The khilafah of al-Siddiq was for just a little over two

years; the khilafah of ‘Umar lasted a little over ten years; and

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the khilafah of ‘Ali was for a little over four years. During his (‘Uthman’s) khilafah, there were those who entered Islam unwillingly, and they were hypocrites, such as Ibn Saba and his likes, and they were those who started the fitnah (crisis) by killing him.(١)

Really? ‘Abd Allah b. Saba “unwillingly” accepted Islam and, within a short period, successfully masterminded the assassination and overthrow of the mighty khalifah?! Is there any reliable evidence for this? Well, our Shaykh makes no attempt to pretend that there is any! He has neither quoted any riwayah with any sanad, nor has he provided any evidence whatsoever for the authenticity of any report on his claims.

All right then, is there anything else we should know about ‘Abd Allah b. Saba? Our Shaykh says “yes”:

ولا ريب أن كثيرا ممن يحب الرسول من بنى هاشم وغيرهم وقد تشيع قد تلقى من الرافضه ما هو من أعظم الأمور قدحا فى الرسول فإن أصل الرفض إنما أحدثه زنديق غرضه إبطال دين الإسلام والقدح فى رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم كما قد ذكر ذلك العلماء وكان عبد الله بن سبأ شيخ الرافضه لما أظهر الإسلام أراد أن يفسد الإسلام بمكره وخبثه كما فعل بولص بدين النصارى

There is no doubt that a lot of those who loved the Messenger among the Banu Hashim and others - and who also became Shi’ah - imbibed from the Rafidhah some of the most blasphemous matters concerning the Messenger. This is because al-rafdh was founded by an infidel, whose aim was to destroy

p: ١١

١- Ibid, vol. ٨, pp. ٣١٥-٣١٦

the religion of Islam, and to blaspheme the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, as mentioned by the scholars. ‘Abd Allah b. Saba – the shaykh of the Rafidhah - when he professed Islam, he intended to corrupt Islam with his plots and malice, as Paul did

(with Christianity.(1)

Interestingly, once again, our Shaykh fails to provide any proof whatsoever for his claims!

So, what exactly did 'Abd Allah b. Saba do to found Shi'ism? Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah thinks he has a clue on that as well:

قد علم أهل العلم أن أول ما ظهرت الشيعه الإماميه المدعيه للنص فى أواخر أيام الخلفاء الراشدين وافترى ذلک عبدالله بن سبأ وطائفه الکذابون فلم يکونوا موجودين قبل ذلک

The scholars have known that the Shi'ah Imamiyyah, who claimed the nass (for 'Ali), first appeared during the last periods of the rule of the khulafa al-rashidin (i.e. the rightly guided khalifahs). That was invented by 'Abd Allah b. Saba and a group of liars. (So, they never existed before then.(2)

He adds:

وهذا معروف عن ابن سبا واتباعه وهو الذى ابتدع النص فى على وابتدع أنه معصوم

And this is well-known about Ibn Saba and his followers. He was the one who innovated the nass (i.e. a claim of prophetic appointment as khalifah) for 'Ali, and (innovated the claim that he ('Ali) was mas'um (infallible).(3)

The only problem here is that there is ZERO evidence provided to support these claims. Merely claiming that the rumours were "well-known" is not sufficient. An authentically transmitted eye-witness account is required in cases like

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1- Ibid, vol. 8, pp. 478-479
2- Ibid, vol. 8, p. 251
3- Ibid, vol. 7, p. 220

this. None is quoted anyway, anywhere!

Were there any the other "innovations" created by 'Abd Allah b. Saba? Our Shaykh :proceeds

قلنا نعم وأشـهر الناس بالرده خصوم أبى بكر الصـديق رضـى الله عنه وأتباعه كمسـيلمه الكذاب وأتباعه وغيرهم وهؤلاء تتولاهم الرافضه كما ذكر ذلك غير واحـد من شـيوخهم مثل هـذا الإمامى وغيره ويقولون إنهم كانوا على الحق وأن الصديق قاتلهم بغير حق ثم من أظهر الناس رده الغاليه الـذين حرقهم على رضـى الله عنه بالنار لما ادعوا فيه الإلهيه وهـم السـبائيه أتباع عبدالله بن سـبأ الذين أظهروا سب أبى بكر وعمر

We say: yes, the most notorious of mankind for apostasy were the enemies of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, may Allah be pleased with him, and his followers, such as Musaylamah the Liar and his followers and others. These people (i.e. the apostates) are loved by the Rafidhah, as mentioned by many of their shuyukh, like this Imami and others. They say that they (those apostates) were upon the truth, and that al-Siddiq fought .them unjustly

Those who were most notorious among mankind for extreme apostasy were those burnt with fire by 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, when they called him Allah. They were the Sabaiyyah, followers of 'Abd Allah b. Saba, those who were the first to curse (Abu Bakr and 'Umar.(١)

:He reiterates the same elsewhere

وأين شـبهه مثـل أبى موسـى الأشـعرى الـذى وافق عمرا على عزل على ومعاويه وأن يجعل الأمر شورى فى المسـلمين من شـبهه عبدالله بن سبأ وأمثاله الذين يدعون أنه إمام معصوم أو أنه إله أو نبى

Where

١- Ibid, vol. ٣, pp. ٤٥٨-٤٥٩

is the confusion of the likes of Abu Musa al-Ash'ari who concurred with 'Amr to dethrone (both) 'Ali and Mu'awiyah and to subject the matter to consultation among the Muslims from the confusion of 'Abd Allah b. Saba and his likes who called him (i.e. ('Ali) an infallible Imam, or that he was Allah, or that he was a prophet?(١)

Once more, our Shaykh makes no attempt to quote any report or chain for his submissions. Meanwhile, we have decided to help him out and his followers by actually checking the authenticity of all the primary Sunni riwayat about ‘Abd Allah b. Saba – especially all those ones that Sunnis table as evidence concerning him - in order to distinguish the truths from the fables. We sincerely hope that this work of ours will be highly beneficial to every soul seeking to learn the real truth about the character called Ibn Saba and the activities and doctrines that have been attributed to him. In this book, we have adopted the same strict investigative and transparent research methodology as we did in our first and second books. We implore Allah to forgive us all our mistakes, and to accept this as a worthy act of ‘ibadah. And may Allah send His salawat and barakat upon our master, Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah, and .upon his purified offspring

Tracing The Fairytale: Explicit Athar Naming ‘Abd Allah B. Saba .١

point

Reports and statements in Sunni books mentioning the name “Abd Allah b. Saba” are :generally of three types

.Riwayat with full chains of transmission .١

.٢

Ibid, vol. ٢, p. ۶١ -١

.Riwayat with NO chain of transmission

Unsupported testimonies and submissions of Sunni ‘ulama who were never eye- .٣ .witnesses to the events

Apparently, the last two categories are mursal by default, and are therefore dha’if evidences. Chainless and unsupported testimonies are not acceptable as proof, especially in crucial matters like this. So, we will naturally confine ourselves only to

.reports in the books of the Ahl al-Sunnah with chains of narration

Narration One

:Imam Ibn Jarir al-Tabari (d. ٣١٠ H), in his Tarikh, records

فيما كتب به إلى السرى عن شعيب عن سيف عن عطيه عن يزيد الفقعسى قال كان عبدالله بن سبأ يهوديا من أهل صنعاء أمه سوداء فأسلم زمان عثمان ثم تنقل فى بلدان المسلمين يحالو ضلالتهم فبدأ بالحجاز ثم البصره ثم الكوفه ثم الشام فلم يقدر على ما يريد عند أحد من أهل الشأم فأخرجوه حتى أتى مصر فاعتمر فيهم فقال لهم فيما يقول لعجب ممن يزعم أن عيسى يرجع ويكذب بأن محمدا يرجع وقد قال الله عز و جل إن الذى فرض عليك القرآن لرادك إلى معاد فمحمد أحق بالرجوع من عيسى قال فقبل ذلك عنه ووضع لهم الرجعه فتكلموا فيها ثم قال لهم بعد ذلك إنه كان ألف نبى ولكل نبى وصى وكان على وصى محمد ثم قال محمد خاتم الأنبياء وعلى خاتم الأوصياء ثم قال بعد ذلك من أظلم ممن لم يجز وصيه رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم ووثب على وصى رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم وتناول أمر الأمه ثم قال لهم بعد ذلك إن عثمان أخذها بغير حق وهذا وصى رسول الله صلى الله عليه

p: ١٥

و سلم

:Al-Sirri - Shu'ayb - Sayf - 'Atiyyah - Yazid al-Faq'asi

Abd Allah b. Saba was a Jew from the people of San'a (the capital of Yemen). His' mother was black. He accepted Islam during the rule of 'Uthman. Then he roamed the cities of the Muslims trying to turn them into heretics. He started with the Hijaz (in Saudi Arabia), then Basra (in Iraq), then Kufa (in Iraq), then Syria. But he did not achieve his aim with any of the people of Syria. Rather, they expelled him and he went to Egypt, and he settled among them. Then, he said to them, "It is strange of he who claims that 'Isa will return but rejects that Muhammad will return. Meanwhile, Allah the Almighty has said, 'Verily, He Who has ordained the Qur'an upon you (O Muhammad) will surely bring you back to a place of return' (٢٨:٨٥). As such, Muhammad is more entitled to return than 'Isa." So, it was accepted from him, and he created for them (the doctrine of) al-raj'ah, and they spoke about it. Then he said, "Muhammad is the last of the prophets and 'Ali is the last of the designated (immediate) successors (of prophets)." Then he added after that, "Who is more unjust that he who did not fulfil the testamentary will of the Messenger of Allah, peace be

upon him and jumped over the designated successor of the Messenger of Allah, "?peace be upon him and administered the affairs of the Ummah

p: ۱۶

Then he said to them, "Verily, 'Uthman unjustly seized it, and this ('Ali) is the (designated successor of the Messenger of Allah."(۱)

The same report, with very slight variations, is later re-narrated by Imam Ibn Asakir :(d. ۵۷۱ H) as well

أخبرنا أبو القاسم إسـماعيل بن أحمد أنا أحمد بن النقور أنا محمد بن عبد الرحمن بن العباس أنا أبو بكر بن سـيف نا السرى بن يحيى نا شـعيب بن إبراهيم نا سـيف بن عمر عن عطيه عن يزيد الفقعسـى قال كان ابن سـبأ يهوديا من أهل صنعاء من أمه سوداء فأسـلم زمن عثمان بن عفان ثم تنقل فى بلاد المسـلمين يحاول ضـلالتهم فبدأ بالحجاز ثم بالبصـره ثم الكوفه ثم الشام فلم يقدر على ما يريد عند أحد من أهل الشام فأخرجوه حتى أتى مصـر فاعتمر فيهم فقال لهم فيما كان يقول العجب ممن يزعم أن عيسى يرجع ويكـذب بأن محمـدا يرجع وقد قال الله عز وجل إن الذى فرض عليك القرآن لرادك إلى معاد فمحمد أحق بالرجوع من عيسـى قال فقبل ذلك عنه ووضع له الرجعه فتكلموا فيها ثم قال بعد ذلك إنه كان ألف نبى ولكل نبى وصـى وكان على وصى محمـد ثم قال محمد خاتم النبيين وعلى خاتم الأوصـياء ثم قال بعد ذلك من أظلم ممن لم يجز وصـيه رسول الله صـلى الله عليه وسلم ووثب على وصى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ثم تناول الأمه ثم قال لهم بعد ذلك إن عثمان قد جمع أموالا أخذها بغير حقها وهذا وصى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

– Abu al-Qasim Isma'il b. Ahmad – Ahmad b. al-Nuqur

p: ۱۷

۱- Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari, Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; ۱st edition, ۱۴۰۷ H), vol. ۲, p. ۶۴۷

Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. al-'Abbas – Abu Bakr b. Sayf – al-Sirri b. Yahya – :Shu'ayb b. Ibrahim – Sayf b. 'Umar – 'Atiyyah – Yazid al-Faq'asi

Ibn Saba was a Jew from the people of San'a (the capital of Yemen), from a black slave-woman. He accepted Islam during the rule of 'Uthman. Then he roamed the cities of the Muslims trying to turn them into heretics. He started with the Hijaz (in Saudi Arabia), then Basra (in Iraq), then Kufa (in Iraq), then Syria. But he did not

achieve his aim with any of the people of Syria. Rather, they expelled him and he went to Egypt, and he settled among them. Then, he said to them, "It is strange of he who claims that 'Isa will return but rejects that Muhammad will return. Meanwhile, Allah the Almighty has said, 'Verily, He Who has ordained the Qur'an upon you (O Muhammad) will surely bring you back to a place of return' (۲۸:۸۵). As such, Muhammad is more entitled to return than 'Isa." So, it was accepted from him, and he created for them (the doctrine of) al-raj'ah, and they spoke about it. Then he said, "There were one thousand prophets, and each prophet had a designated successor. And 'Ali was the designated successor of Muhammad." Then he said, "Muhammad is the last of the prophets and 'Ali is the last of the designated (immediate) successors (of prophets)." Then he added after that, "Who is more unjust that he who

did not fulfil the testamentary will of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and jumped over the designated successor of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and administered the Ummah?" Then he said to them, "Verily, 'Uthman unjustly embezzled funds, and this ('Ali) is the designated successor of the Messenger of Allah."(۱)

This riwayah of Yazid al-Faq'asi is the only one – with a chain of narration - throughout all books of the Ahl al-Sunnah that makes the following claims:

۱. 'Abd Allah b. Saba, la'natullah 'alaihi, had a black slave mother.

۲. He accepted Islam during the rule of 'Uthman.

۳. He believed that Imam 'Ali, 'alaihi al-salam, was the designated successor of Prophet Muhammad, sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi.

۴. He believed in the 'aqidah called al-raj'ah.

So, if the report collapses, all the four points above go down with it. There would be absolutely nothing else to base those assertions upon. Therefore, let us examine the narrators.

In the chain of the riwayah, there is Shu'ayb b. Ibrahim. Who was he? Was he reliable or not? Al-Hafiz (d. ۸۵۲ H) helps us out here:

شعیب بن إبراهیم الکوفی :روایه کتب سیف عنه فیه جهاله انتهی .ذکره ابن عدی وقال لیس بالمعروف وله أحادیث واخبار وفیه بعض النکره وفیها ما فیه تحامل علی السلف وفی ثقات ابن حبان شعیب بن إبراهیم من أهل الکوفه یروی عن محمد بن أبان البلخی روی عنه یعقوب بن سفیان فیحتمل ان یکون هو والظاهر أنه غیره

Shu'ayb b. Ibrahim al-Kufi: the narration of the books of Sayf

p: ۱۹

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۱ - Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. al-Hasan b. Habat Allah b. 'Abd Allah, Ibn Asakir al-Shafi'i, Tarikh Madinah Dimashq (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; ۱۴۱۵ H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. ۲۹, pp. ۳-۴

was by him. There is obscurity concerning him. Ibn 'Adi mentioned him and said, "He is unknown. He narrated ahadith and stories, and there is some repugnancy concerning him. Among his narrations are those which are prejudiced against the Salaf." In al-Thiqat, Ibn Hibban said, "Shu'ayb b. Ibrahim, from the people of Kufah. He narrated from Muhammad b. Aban al-Balkhi and Ya'qub b. Sufyan narrated from him". It is possible that he (i.e. the Shu'ayb mentioned by Ibn Hibban) was him (i.e. the Shu'ayb (who narrated from Sayf), but what is obvious is that he was not him.(۱)

Therefore, Shu'ayb b. Ibrahim is majhul (unknown). Ordinarily, we should simply ignore the other narrators in the chain. This singular fact about Shu'ayb itself has torpedoed the entire report. But, there is more!

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. ۷۴۸ H) wants us to know about Sayf too:

سیف بن عمر التمیمی الأسیدی :ویقال الضبی الکوفی. صاحب کتاب الفتوح وکتاب الرده ن وغیر ذلک. روی عن: جابر الجعفی، وهشام بن عروه، وإسماعیل بن أبی خالد، وعبید الله بن عمر، وطائفه کثیره من المجاهیل والإخباریین. روی عنه: النضر بن حماد العتکی، ویعقوب بن إبراهیم الزهری، وشعیب بن إبراهیم الکوفی، وأبو معمر إسماعیل القطعی، وجباره بن المغلس، وآخرون. قال یحیی بن معین: ضعیف الحدیث. وقال أبو حاتم: متروک. بابه الواقدی. وقال أبو داوود: لیس بشیء. وقال ابن حبان: اتهم بالزندقه. وروی عباس عن یحیی قال: سیف بن عمر الضبی یحدث عنه المحاربی، ضعیف. وکذا قال النسائی. وقال

الحاکم: سیف بن عمر الضبی أتهم بالزندقه، وهو ساقط فی روایه الحدیث. وروی

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۱ - Shihab al-Din Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Lisan al-Mizan (Beirut: Manshurat Muasassat al-A'lami li al-Matbu'at; ۲nd edition, ۱۳۹۰ H), vol. ۳, p. ۱۴۵, ۵۱۷

ابن حبان بإسناد إنه کان یضع الحدیث.

Sayf b. 'Umar al-Tamimi al-Usaydi: He is also called al-Dhabi al-Kufi, author of Kitab al-Futuh, Kitab al-Riddah and others. He narrated from: Jabir al-Ju'fi, Hisham b. 'Urwah, Isma'il b. Abi Khalid, 'Ubayd Allah b. 'Umar, and a lot of unknown narrators and storytellers. Those who narrated from him are: al-Nadhar b. Hamad al-'Atki, Ya'qub b. Ibrahim al-Zuhri, Shu'ayb b. Ibrahim al-Kufi, Abu Ma'mar Isma'il al-Qat'i, Jabarah b. al-Muglis, and others. Yahya b. Ma'in said: "He is dha'if in hadith". Abu Hatim said, "He is matruk (rejected), the same kind with al-Waqidi". Abu Dawud said, "He is nothing." Ibn Hibban said, "He is accused of disbelief". And 'Abbas narrated that Yahya said, "Sayf b. 'Umar al-Dhabi narrated ahadith from al-Muharibi. He is dha'if." Al-Nasai said the same thing. Al-Hakim said, "Sayd b. 'Umar al-Dhabi. He is accused of disbelief, and he is a failure as long as hadith narration is concerned." Ibn Hibban narrates with a chain that he used to fabricate ahadith.(۱)

'Allamah al-Albani (d. ۱۴۲۰ H) also says:

وأما سیف بن عمر ؛ فمعروف؛ لکنه متهم بالوضع؛ قال الذهبی فی "المغنی": "له توالیف، متروک باتفاق".

As for Sayf b. 'Umar, he is well-known. However, he has been accused of fabricating reports. Al-Dhahabi said in al-Mughni: "He wrote books. He is rejected (matruk) by consensus."(۲)

Elsewhere, the 'Allamah adds:

قلت: وفی هذا نظر، فإن أکثر الطرق المشار إلیها مدارها علی سیف بن عمر والواقدی وهما کذابان

I say: There is an error in this, for most of the indicated chains,

p: ٢١

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١ - Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, Tarikh al-Islam wa Wafiyat al-Mashahir wa al-A'lam (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi; ١st edition, ١۴٠٧ H) [Dr. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salam Tadmiri], vol. ١١, pp. ١۶١-١۶٢, ۴

٢ - Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Dha'ifah wa al-Mawdhu'ah wa Atharihah al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma'arif; ١st edition, ١۴١٢ H), vol. ١١, p. ٧۴٨, ۵۴۴٠

their pivot is Sayf b. 'Umar and al-Waqidi, and they both were LIARS.(١)

Apparently, no one can ever be more unreliable than Sayf!

It is even further interesting that the man who was supposed to have witnessed all of 'Abd Allah b. Saba's actions – including all his journeys and experiences in Hijaz, Basra, Kufa, Syria and Egypt – Yazid al-Faq'asi is completely and absolutely unknown (majhul). It is so bad that he does not even have a single entry in any Sunni book of rijal!

With the above, it is crystal clear that the only report throughout all Sunni books - which connects one 'Abd Allah b. Saba with Judaism, Yemen, a black mother, the doctrine of al-raj'ah, the wisayah (designated succession) of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali, and acceptance of Islam during 'Uthman's rule – is absolutely mawdu' (fabricated). No report can be more worthless than it is.

Narration Two

So, let us find out if there is an alternative Sunni report which refers explicitly to 'Abd Allah b. Saba. Through our investigations, we discovered that only six more exist, apart from the mawdu' one above. This is one of those six, recorded by Imam Ibn Asakir:

أخبرنا أبو البركات الأنماطي أنا أبو طاهر أحمـد بن الحسن وأبو الفضل أحمـد بن الحسن قالا أنا عبـد الملك بن محمد بن عبد

الله أنا أبو على بن الصواف نا محمـد بن عثمان بن أبى شـيبه نا محمـد بن العلاء نا أبو بكر بن عياش عن مجالد عن الشـعبى قال أول من كذب عبد الله بن سبأ

Abu al-Barakat al-Anmati

p: ٢٢

١- Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; ١st edition, ١٤١٥ H), vol. ٣, pp. ١٠١-١٠٢, ١١١٠

Abu Tahir Ahmad b. al-Hasan and Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. al-Hasan – 'Abd al-Malik b. – Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah – Abu 'Ali b. al-Sawaf – Muhammad b. 'Uthman b. Abi Shaybah – Muhammad b. al-'Ala – Abu Bakr b. 'Ayyash – Mujalid – al-Sha'bi:

The first one to tell a lie was 'Abd Allah b. Saba.(١)

This chain, however, is mawdu' too! Imam al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (d. ٤٦٣ H) documents under his biography of Muhammad b. 'Uthman b. Abi Shaybah:

أخبرنا على بن محمد بن الحسين الدقاق قال قرانا على الحسين بن هارون عن أبى العباس بن سعيد قال سمعت عبد الله بن أسامه الكلبى يقول محمد بن عثمان كذاب أخذ كتب بن عبدوس الرازى ما زلنا نعرفه بالكذب

وقال بن سـعيد سمعت إبراهيم بن إسحاق الصواف يقول محمد بن عثمان كذاب ويسرق حديث الناس ويحيل على أقوام بأشياء ليست من حديثهم

قال سمعت داود بن يحيى يقول محمد بن عثمان كذاب وقد وضع أشياء كثيره يحيل على أقوام أشياء ما حدثوا بها قط

وقـال سـمعت عبـد الرحمن بن يوسـف بن خراش يقول محمـد بن عثمـان كـذاب بين الأمر يزيـد فى الأسانيـد ويوصـل ويضـع الحديث

وقال سمعت محمد بن عبد الله الحضرمى يقول محمد بن عثمان كذاب ما زلنا نعرفه بالكذب مذ هو صبى

وقال سمعت عبد الله بن احمد بن حنبل يقول محمد بن عثمان كذاب ...

وقال سـمعت جعفر بن محمد بن أبی عثمان الطيالسـی يقول بن عثمان هذا كذاب يجیء عن قوم بأحاديث ما حدثوا بها قط متی سمع انا عارف به جدا ...

وقال سمعت محمد بن احمد العدوی يقول

p: ٢٣

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١ - Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. al-Hasan b. Habat Allah b. 'Abd Allah, Ibn Asakir al-Shafi'i, Tarikh Madinah Dimashq (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; ١٤١٥ H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. ٢٩, p. ٧

محمد بن عثمان كذاب...

وقال حدثنی محمد بن عبيد بن حماد قال سمعت جعفر بن هذيل يقول محمد بن عثمان كذاب....

Ali b. Muhammad b. al-Husayn al-Daqaq – al-Husayn b. Harun – Abu al-'Abbas b.' Sa'id – 'Abd Allah b. Usamah al-Kalbi: "Muhammad b. 'Uthman is A LIAR. He took the books of Ibn 'Abdaws al-Razi. We have ALWAYS known him as A LIAR."

Ibn Sa'd – Ibrahim b. Ishaq al-Sawaf: "Muhammad b. 'Uthman is A LIAR. He steals the ahadith of the people and he falsely attributes things to people which are never part of their ahadith."

Ibn Sa'd – Dawud b. Yahya: "Muhammad b. 'Uthman is A LIAR. He FABRICATED a lot of things. He falsely attributes things to people which they never narrate at all."

Ibn Sa'd – 'Abd al-Rahman b. Yusuf b. Kharash: "Muhammad b. 'Uthman is a LIAR within the matter. He falsely adds and connects names to the chains (of narrations) and he FABRICATES ahadith."

Ibn Sa'd – Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hadhrami: "Muhammad b. 'Uthman is A LIAR. We have ALWAYS known him as A LIAR since he was a child."

Ibn Sa'd – 'Abd Allah b. Ahmad b. Hanbal: "Muhammad b. 'Uthman is a LIAR....

Ibn Sa'd – Ja'far b. Muhammad b. Abi 'Uthman al-Tayalisi: "This Ibn 'Uthman is A LIAR. He attributes to people ahadith which they never narrated since he started hearing

..."(as a child). I know him very well

"...Ibn Sa'd – Muhammad b. Ahmad al-'Adawi: "Muhammad b. 'Uthman is a LIAR

Ibn Sad – Muhammad b. 'Ubayd

p: ٢۴

(b. Hammad – Ja'far b. Huzayl: "Muhammad b. 'Uthman is A LIAR...."(١

!We need not comment further about him

In the chain is another problematic narrator: Mujalid. Imam al-Dhahabi says about :him too

مجالد بن سعيد الهمدانى. مشهور صاحب حديث على لين فيه.

روى عن قيس بن أبى حازم، والشعبى. وعنه يحيى القطان، وأبو أسامه، وجماعه.

قال ابن معين وغيره: لا يحتج به. وقال أحمد: يرفع كثيرا مما لا يرفعه الناس، ليس بشئ. وقال النسائى: ليس بالقوى. وذكر الأشج أنه شيعى. وقال الدارقطنى: ضعيف. وقال البخارى: كان يحيى بن سعيد يضعفه، وكان ابن مهدى لا يروى عنه.

.Mujalid b. Sa'id al-Hamdani: well-known, a narrator of hadith, with weakness in him

He narrated from Qays b. Abi Hazim and al-Sha'bi, and Yahya b. al-Qattan, Abu .Usamah and a group narrated from him

Ibn Ma'in and others said, "He is not accepted as a hujjah (proof)." Ahmad said, "He attributes to the Prophet lots of what people do not attribute to him. He is nothing." Al-Nasai said, "He is not strong." Al-Ashja' mentioned that he was a Shi'i. Al-Daraqutni said, "Dha'if". Al-Bukhari said, "Yahya b. Sa'id declared him dha'if, and Ibn Mahdi did (not narrate from him."(٢

Apparently, this second narration is extremely mawdu' as well! Yet, we constantly see !some Sunni brothers proudly quoting it as evidence

Narration Three

Let us now examine the third existing Sunni report on ‘Abd Allah b. Saba. Imam Ibn :Asakir documents

أنبأنا أبو بكر محمد بن طرخان بن بلتكين بن يجكم أنا أبو الفضائل محمد بن أحمد بن عبد الباقى بن طوق قال قرئ على أبى

۱- Abu Bakr Ahmad b. ‘Ali al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah), vol. ۳, pp. ۴۵-۴۶, ۹۷۹

۲- Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Uthman al-Dhahabi, Mizan al-I’tidal fi Naqd al-Rijal (Beirut: Dar al-Ma’rifah) [annotator: ‘Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi], vol. ۳, p. ۴۳۸, ۷۰۷۰

القاسم عبيد الله بن على بن عبيد الله الرقى نا أبو أحمد عبيد الله بن محمد بن أبى مسلم أنا أبو عمر محمد بن عبد الواحد أخبرنى الغطافى عن رجاله عن الصادق عن آبائه الطاهرين عن جابر قال لما بويع على خطب الناس فقام إليه عبد الله بن سبأ فقال له أنت دابه الأرض قال فقال له اتق الله فقال له أنت الملك فقال له اتق الله فقال له أنت خلقت الخلق وبسطت الرزق فأمر بقتله فاجتمعت الرافضه فقالت دعه وأنفه إلى ساباط المدائن فإنك إن قتلته بالمدينه خرجت أصحابه علينا وشيعته فنفاه إلى ساباط المدائن فثم القرامطه والرافضه قال ثم قامت إليه طائفه وهم السبيئه وكانوا أحد عشر رجلا فقال ارجعوا فإنى على بن أبى طالب أبى مشهور وأمى مشهوره وأنا ابن عم محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم فقالوا لا نرجع دع داعيك فأحرقهم بالنار وقبروهم فى صحراء أحد عشر مشهوره فقال من بقى ممن لم يكشف رأسه منهم علمنا إنه إله واحتجوا بقول ابن عباس لا يعذب بالنار إلا خالقها قال ثعلب وقد عذب بالنار قبل على أبو بكر الصديق شيخ الإسلام رضى الله عنه وذلك أنه رفع إليه رجل يقال له الفجاءه وقالوا إنه شتم النبى صلى الله عليه وسلم بعد وفاته فأخرجه إلى الصحراء فأحرقه بالنار قال فقال ابن عباس قد عذب أبو بكر بالنار فاعبدوه أيضا

Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Tarkhan b. Baltakin b. Yahbakum – Abu al-Fadhail Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Baqi b. Tawq – Abu al-Qasim ‘Ubayd Allah b. ‘Ali b. ‘Ubayd Allah al-Raqi – Abu Ahmad ‘Ubayd Allah b. Muhammad b.

Abi Muslim – Abu ‘Umar Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahid – al-Ghatafi – his men – al-Sadiq – his pure fathers – Jabir:

When ‘Ali was given the ba’yah (oath of allegiance), he addressed the people. Then,

‘Abd Allah b. Saba stood up to him and said, “You are the Dabbah from the Earth.” He (‘Ali) said, “Fear Allah.” He (‘Abd Allah b. Saba) said, “You are the King.” He (‘Ali) replied, “Fear Allah.” He (‘Abd Allah b. Saba) told him, “You created the creation and you spread the rizq (sustenance)”. Then, he (‘Ali) ordered his execution.

But the Rafidhah gathered and said, “Leave him. Instead, banish him to Sabat of al-Madain. If you killed him in Madinah, his companions and followers would rebel against us.” Therefore, he (‘Ali) banished him to Sabat of al-Madain. So, the Qaramitah and the Rafidhah re-grouped (there). Then a group called al-Sabaiyyah rose to him (‘Ali) and they were eleven men. He (‘Ali) said, “Recant, for I am ‘Ali b. Abi Talib. My father was well-known, and so was my mother. And I am the cousin of Muhammad, peace be upon him.” They replied, “We will not recant. Call your caller.” So, he (‘Ali) burnt them with fire, and buried them in eleven well-known deserts. Those who survived, whose heads were not exposed among them, said, “We know that he is Allah.” And they used the words of Ibn ‘Abbas – “None punishes with fire except its Creator” as proof.

Tha’lab said, “But, Abu Bakr, the shaykh

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of Islam, may Allah be pleased with him, had punished with fire before ‘Ali. It was when a man called al-Faja was brought to him, and they accused him of insulting the Prophet, peace be upon him, after his death. Then he (Abu Bakr) took him out into the desert and burnt him with fire. So, Ibn ‘Abbas said, “Abu Bakr also punished with the fire. Therefore, worship him too.”(۱)

First and foremost, there is a man called al-Ghatafi in the sanad. He is completely unknown amd untraceable. Worse still, he narrated from “his men”, who are also completely unknown and untraceable! As such, the chain is at least doubly majhul, and therefore very dha’if, on account of these facts alone!

Apart from its severe weakness, the report is also historically inaccurate. It assumes that there were groups called the Rafidhah, the Qaramita, and the Sabaiyyah during

the rule of Amir al-Muminin! That simply is ridiculous. This, for instance, is what :Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. ٧٢٨ H) has to say about the origin of the Rafidhah

لكن لفظ الرافضه إنما ظهر لما رفضوا زيد بن على بن الحسين فى خلافه هشام وقصه زيد بن على بن الحسين كانت بعد العشرين ومائه سنه إحدى وعشرين أو اثنتين وعشرين ومائه فى اواخر خلافه هشام

But the word "Rafidhah" (Rejecters) was first used when they rejected (rafadhu) Zayd b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn during the khilafah of Hisham, and the incident of Zayd b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn occurred after ١٢٠ H, ١٢١ H or ١٢٢ H, during

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Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. al-Hasan b. Habat Allah b. 'Abd Allah, Ibn Asakir al-Shafi'i, - ١ Tarikh Madinah Dimashq (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; ١٤١٥ H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. ٢٩, pp. ٩-١٠

(the last days of the khilafah of Hisham.(١

:Elsewhere, he reiterates

قلت الصحيح أنهم سموا رافضه لما رفضوا زيد بن على بن الحسين بن على بن أبى طالب لما خرج بالكوفه أيام هشام بن عبد الملك وقد ذكر هذا أيضا الاشعرى وغيره

I say: the correct opinion is that they were named Rafidhah when they rejected Zayd b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. 'Ali b. Abi Talib, when he rebelled in Kufah during the days of (Hisham b. 'Abd al-Malik. Al-Ash'ari and others have also mentioned this.(٢

So, the Rafidhah and their name surfaced only almost a century after the death of !Imam 'Ali

Narration Four

At this point, we move to the fourth, explicit Sunni report on 'Abd Allah b. Saba. Shaykh :Ibn Taymiyyah submits in his Minhaj

وروى أبو عاصم خشيش بن أصرم فى كتابه ورواه من طريقه أبو عمرو الطلمنكى فى كتابه فى الأصول قال أبو عاصم حدثنا

أحمـد بن محمد وعبد الوارث ابن إبراهيم حدثنا السـندى بن سـليمان الفارسـى حدثنى عبد الله بن جعفر الرقى عن عبد الرحمن بن مالك بن مغول عن أبيه قال قلت لعامر الشـعبى ما ردک عن هؤلاء القوم وقـد کنت فيهم رأسا قال رأيتهم يأخذون بأعجاز لا صـدور لها ثم قال لى يا مالك لو أردت أن يعطونى رقابهم عبيدا أو يملئوا لى بيتى ذهبا أو يحجوا إلى بيتى هذا على أن أكذب على على رضـى الله عنه لفعلوا ولاـ والله لاـ أكـذب عليه أبـدا يـا مالك إنى قـد درست الأهواء فلم أر فيها أحمق من الخشبيه فلو كانوا من الطير لكانوا رخما ولو كانوا من الدواب لكانوا حمرا يا

١- Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, ١۴٠۶ H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. ١, pp. ٣۴-٣۵

٢- Ibid, vol. ٣, p. ۴٧١

مالـك لم يـدخلوا فى الإسـلام رغبه فيه لله ولاـ رهبه من الله ولكن مقتـا من الله عليهم وبغيـا منهم على أهل الإسـلام يريـدون أن يغمصوا دين الإسـلام كما غمص بولص بن يوشع ملك اليهود دين النصـرانيه ولا تجاوز صلاتهم آذانهم قد حرقهم على بن أبى طالب رضـى الله عنه بالنار ونفاهم من البلاد منهم عبد الله بن سـبأ يهودى من يهود صنعاء نفاه إلى ساباط وأبو بكر الكروس نفاه إلى الجابيه وحرق منهم قوما أتوه فقالوا أنت هو فقال من أنا فقالوا أنت ربنا فأمر بنار

Abu 'Asim Khashish b. Asrama recorded in his book; and through his route, Abu 'Amr al-Talmanki documented it in his book on al-Usul. Abu 'Asim said: Ahmad b. Muhammad and 'Abd al-Warith b. Ibrahim – al-Sanadi b. Sulayman al-Farisi – 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far al-Raqqi – 'Abd al-Rahman b. Malik b. Migwal – his father:

I said to Amir al-Sha'bi, "Why did you leave these people, while you used to be their head?"

He replied, "Their opinions are derived from invalid sources. They lack any basis." Then he said, "O Malik, If I had demanded that they became my slaves or filled my house with gold, or made Hajj to this house of mine, and that in exchange I would lie upon 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, they would have done so. But, by Allah, I will never lie upon him, never! O Malik, I have studied the various sects. However, I have never seen among them any which is more stupid than the

Khashabiyyah. If they were from birds, they would have been vultures; and if they had been from animals, they would have been donkeys. O Malik, they did not enter Islam out of hope in it from Allah, nor from fear of Allah. Rather, it was due to the hatred of Allah upon them, and their rebellion upon the people of Islam. They seek to corrupt the religion of Islam as Paul b. Yusha', king of the Jews, corrupted Christianity. Their salat never exceed their azan. 'Ali b. Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, had burnt them with fire, and banished them from the towns. Among them was 'Abd Allah b. Saba the Jew from the Jews of San'a. He banished him to Sabat (of the Madain area). As for Abu Bakr al-Karus, he banished him to al-Jabiyyah. He (also) burnt a group among them who came to him and said, 'You are Him.' He asked, 'Who am I?' They replied, 'You are our God.'" So, he ordered for a fire.(١)

In the chain is 'Abd al-Rahman b. Malik b. Migwal. Al-Hafiz says about him:

عبـد الرحمن بن مالك بن مغول :روى عن أبيه والأعمش .قال احمـد والـدارقطنى متروك وقال أبو داود كذاب وقال مره يضع الحديث وقال النسائى وغيره ليس بثقه

'Abd al-Rahman b. Malik b. Migwal: he narrated from his father and al-A'mash. Ahmad and al-Daraqutni said: "Matruk (rejected)". Abu Dawud said, "A LIAR", and also said, "he FABRICATED ahadith". Al-Nasai and others said, "He is NOT trustworthy."(٢)

'Allamah

١- Ibid, vol. ١, pp. ٢٨-٣٠

٢- Shihab al-Din Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Lisan al-Mizan (Beirut: Manshurat Muasassat al-A'lami li al-Matbu'at; ٢nd edition, ١٣٩٠ H), vol. ٣, p. ٤٢٧, ١۶٧۶

al-Albani also states about another chain containing his name:

قلت: ورجاله ثقات غير عبـد الرحمن بن مالك بن مغول، وهو كـذاب كما قال أبو داود، وقال الـدارقطنى: متروك، فهو آفه هذا الإسناد

I say: Its narrators are trustworthy except 'Abd al-Rahman b. Malik b. Migwal, AND HE WAS A LIAR, as stated by Abu Dawud. And al-Daraqutni said, "Matruk (rejected)", and (he is the defect in this chain.(١)

As if this was not enough, al-Sanadi b. Sulayman al-Farisi – also in the chain under inspection – is absolutely majhul, with no trace in the Sunni books of rijal! We honestly wonder how Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah dared to use such a report as evidence to .establish points about the Shi'ah

Narration Five

:A twin report is further documented by Ibn Taymiyyah

روى أبو حفص بن شاهين فى كتاب اللطيف فى السنه حدثنا محمد بن أبى القاسم بن هارون حدثنا أحمد بن الوليد الواسطى حدثنى جعفر بن نصير الطوسى الواسطى عن عبد الرحمن بن مالك بن مغول عن أبيه قال قال لى الشعبى أحذركم هذه الأهواء المضله وشرها الرافضه لم يدخلوا فى الإسلام رغبه ولا رهبه ولكن مقتا لأهل الإسلام وبغيا عليهم قد حرقهم على رضى الله عنه بالنار ونفاهم إلى البلدان منهم عبد الله ابن سبأ يهودى من يهود صنعاء نفاه الى ساباط

Abu Hafs b. Shahin recorded in Kitab al-Latif fi al-Sunnah: Muhammad b. Abi al-Qasim b. Harun – Ahmad b. al-Walid al-Wasiti – Ja'far b. Nasir al-Tusi al-Wasiti – 'Abd al-Rahman b. Malik b. Migwal – his father:

Al-Sha'bi said to me, "I warn you concerning these heretical

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١ - Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; ١st edition, ١۴١۵ H), vol. ٢, p. ۴٧١, ٨٢۴

sects, and the worst of them are the Rafidhah. They do not enter Islam out of hope (in it from Allah), nor from fear (of Allah). Rather, they do so out of hatred of the people of Islam and in rebellion against them. 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, had burnt them with fire and banished them to towns. Among them was 'Abd Allah b. Saba, a

(Jew from the Jews of San'a. He ('Ali) exiled him to Sabat (of al-Madain).(١)

In the chain is 'Abd al-Rahman, who was a liar and hadith fabricator. So, the riwayah is mawdhu'.

Besides, this is what al-Hafiz records about al-Sha'bi:

قال أبو سعد ابن السمعانى ولد سنه عشرين وقيل سنه ٣١ ومات سنه ١٠٩

Abu Sa'd b. al-Sam'ani said: "He (al-Sha'bi) was born in ٢٠ H, and it is said ٣١ H, and he died in ١٠٩ H.(٢)

Meanwhile, this is what Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah himself confesses about the term "Rafidhah":

لكن لفظ الرافضه إنما ظهر لما رفضوا زيد بن على بن الحسين فى خلافه هشام وقصه زيد بن على بن الحسين كانت بعد العشرين ومائه سنه إحدى وعشرين أو اثنتين وعشرين ومائه فى اواخر خلافه هشام

But the word "Rafidhah" (Rejecters) was first used when they rejected (rafadhu) Zayd b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn during the khilafah of Hisham, and the incident of Zayd b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn occurred after ١٢٠ H, ١٢١ H or ١٢٢ H, during the last days of the khilafah of Hisham.(٣)

In simpler words, al-Sh'abi had already died before that word was ever

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١- Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; ١st edition, ١۴٠۶ H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. ١, p. ٢٣

٢- Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib (Dar al-Fikr; ١st edition, ١۴٠۴ H), vol. ۵, p. ۵٩, ١١٠

٣- Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; ١st edition, ١۴٠۶ H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. ١, pp. ٣۴-٣۵

used in human history! How then did he manage to tell ‘Abd al-Rahman’s father about the Rafidhah from his grave?!

Narration Six

Al-Hafiz gives us the sixth existing explicit Sunni report on ‘Abd Allah b. Saba:

وقال أبو إسحاق الفزارى عن شعبه عن سلمه بن كهيل عن أبى الزعراء عن زيد بن وهب أن سويد بن غفله دخل على على فى إمارته فقال انى مررت بن بنفر يذكرون أبا بكر وعمر يرون انك تضمر لهما مثل ذلك منهم عبد الله بن سبا وكان عبد الله أول من أظهر ذلك فقال على مالى ولهذا الخبيث الأسود ثم قال معاذ الله أضمر لهما الا الحسن الجميل ثم أرسل إلى عبد الله بن سبا فسيره إلى المدائن وقال لا يساكننى فى بلده ابدا ثم نهض إلى المنبر حتى اجتمع الناس فذكر القصه فى ثنائه عليهما بطوله وفى آخره الا ولا يبلغنى عن أحد يفضلنى عليهما الا جلدته حد المفترى

Abu Ishaq al-Fazari narrated from Shu’bah from Salamah b. Kuhayl from Abu al-Za’ra from Zayd b. Wahb that Suwayd b. Ghaflah entered upon ‘Ali during his rule, and said, “I passed by a group who were mentioning Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, claiming that you hold the same views towards them both. Among them was ‘Abd Allah b. Saba, and he was the first to manifest that. So, ‘Ali said, “What does this evil black man want from me?” Then he said, “I seek Allah’s refuge. My opinion of them both (i.e. Abu Bakr and ‘Umar) is nothing but good and beautiful.” Then he sent a messenger to ‘Abd Allah

b. Saba and exiled him to al-Madain, and said, “He shall not live in the same town as me ever again”. Then he rushed to the pulpit and gathered the people, and delivered a long speech to praise them both (i.e. Abu Bakr and ‘Umar). At its end, he said, “Verily, if it reaches me that anyone places me above them both, I will whip him with the whipping of a lying slanderer.”(١)

So, who was Abu al-Za’ra? Al-Barqani (d. ۴٢۵ H) disagrees with a popular choice here, as documented by al-Hafiz:

وروى البرقانى فى اللفظ من طريق شعبه عن سلمه بن كهيل عن أبى الزعراء وعن زيد بن وهب أن سويد بن غفله دخل على على فى امارته فقال يا أمير المؤمنين انى مررت بنفر يذكرون أبا بكر وعمر الحديث. قال البرقانى أبو الزعراء هذا هو حجيه بن

عدی ولیس هو صاحب ابن مسعود ذاک اسمه عبد الله بن هانئ.

Al-Barqani narrated in the text from the route of Shu'bah from Salamah b. Kuhayl from Abu al-Za'ra, and from Zayd b. Wahb that Suwayd b. Ghaflah entered upon 'Ali during his rule, and said, "O Amir al-Muminin! I passed by a group who were mentioning Abu Bakr and 'Umar." The hadith. Al-Barqani said: "This Abu al-Za'ra was Hujayyah b. 'Adi, and not the companion of Ibn Mas'ud, whose name was 'Abd Allah b. Hani."(۲)

Al-Barqani has corroboration from Imam Muslim (d. ۲۶۱ H), who identifies Hujayyah as:

أبو الزعراء أحجیه بن عدی الکندی

Abu al-Za'ra Hujayyah b. 'Adi al-Kindi(۳)

However, these positions of both al-Barqani

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۱ - Shihab al-Din Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Lisan al-Mizan (Beirut: Manshurat Muasassat al-A'lami li al-Matbu'at; ۲nd edition, ۱۳۹۰ H), vol. ۳, p. ۲۹۰, ۱۲۲۵

۲ - Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib (Dar al-Fikr; ۱st edition, ۱۴۰۴ H), vol. ۲, p. ۱۹۰, ۳۹۹

۳ - Muslim b. al-Hajjaj, al-Kuna wa al-Asma (Madinah al-Munawwarah: al-Jami'ah al-Islamiyyah; ۱st edition, ۱۴۰۴ H) [annotator: 'Abd al-Rahim Muhammad Ahmad al-Qushqari], vol. ۱, p. ۳۴۶, ۱۲۴۹

and Muslim are of no convincing basis in the eyes of al-Hafiz, who submits elsewhere in the same book that only three people – excluding Hujayyah – were actually known as Abu al-Za'ra:

من کنیته أبو الزعراء

أبو الزعراء الأزدی الأکبر، اسمه: عبد الله بن هانئ، تقدم.

أبو الزعراء الجشمی الأصغر، اسمه: عمرو بن عمر، تقدم.

أبو الزعراء الطائی، اسمه: یحیی بن الولید الکوفی، تقدم.

:Those whose kunya was Abu al-Za'ra

.Abu al-Za'ra al-Azdi al-Akbar: his name was 'Abd Allah b. Hani .١

.Abu al-Za'ra al-Jashmi al-Asghar: his name was 'Amr b. 'Umar .٢

(Abu al-Za'ra al-Tai: his name was Yahya b. al-Walid al-Kufi.(١ .٣

In his Taqrib, he has equally omitted "Abu al-Za'ra" from the names of Hujayyah (٢). Meanwhile, other major Sunni rijal scholars who have also conspicuously omitted "Abu al-Za'ra" from the names of Hujayyah include: Imam Ibn Sa'd (d. ٢٣٠ H)(٣), Imam al-'Ijli (d. ٢٦١ H)(۴), Imam Ibn Abi Hatim (d. ٣٢٧ H)(۵), Ibn Hibban (d. ٣۵۴ H)(۶), Imam al-Mizzi (d. ٧۴٢)(٧), and Imam al-Dhahabi (d. ٧۴٨ H)(٨).

Besides, the riwayah transmitted by Hujayyah (which is also often quoted on Ibn Saba) is very different from that narrated by "Abu al-Za'ra". Imam Ibn Abi Khaythamah (d. ٢٧٩ H) reports:

حدثنا محمد بن عباد المکی قال نا سفیان قال نا عبد الجبار بن عباس الهمدانی عن سلمه عن حجیه بن عدی الکندی :رأیت علیا علی المنبر وهو یقول من یعذرنی من هذا الحمیت الأسود الذی یکذب علی الله یعنی ابن السوداء

Muhammad b. 'Abbad – Sufyan – 'Abd al-Jabbar b. 'Abbas al-Hamdani – Salamah – Hujayyah b.

١- Ibid, vol. ١٢, p. ٩٠

٢ - Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; ٢nd edition, ١۴١۵ H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. ١, p. ١٩٢, ١١۵۴

Muhammad b. Sa'd, al-Tabaqat al-Kubra (Beirut: Dar al-Sadir), vol. ۶, p. ۲۲۵ -۳
Abu al-Hasan Ahmad b. 'Abd Allah b. Salih al-'Ijli al-Kufi, Ma'rifat al-Thiqat - ۴ (Madinah: Maktabah al-Dar; ۱st edition, ۱۴۰۵ H), vol. ۱, p. ۲۸۸, ۲۷۵
Abu Muhammad 'Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Hatim Muhamamd b. Idris b. al-Munzir al- -۵ Tamimi al-Hanzali al-Razi, al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; ۱st edition, ۱۳۷۱ H), vol. ۳, p. ۳۱۴, ۱۴۰۰
Abu Hatim Muhammad b. Hibban b. Ahmad al-Tamimi al-Busti, Kitab al-Thiqat - ۶ (Hyderabad: Majlis Dairat al-Ma'arif al-'Uthmaniyyah; ۱st edition, ۱۳۹۸ H), vol. ۴, p. ۱۸۶
Abu al-Hajjaj Jamal al-Din Yusuf al-Mizzi, Tahdhib al-Kamal fi Asma al-Rijal (Beirut -۷ by Muasassat al-Risalah; ۴th edition, ۱۴۱۳ H) [annotator: Dr. Bashar 'Awad Ma'ruf], vol. ۵, p. ۴۸۵, ۱۱۴۱
Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, Mizan al-I'tidal fi Naqd -۸ al-Rijal (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah; ۱st edition, ۱۳۸۲ H) [annotator: 'Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi], vol. ۱, p. ۴۶۶, ۱۷۵۹; Shams al-Din Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad b. al-Dhahabi al-Dimashqi, al-Kashif fi Ma'rifat Man Lahu Riwayat fi al-Kutub al-Sittah (Jeddah: Dar al-Qiblah li al-Thaqafat al-Islamiyyah; ۱st edition, ۱۴۱۳ H), vol. ۱, p. ۳۱۵, ۹۵۶

:Adi al-Kindi'

I saw 'Ali upon the pulpit and he was saying, "Who will excuse me of this evil black (CONTAINER, who tells lies upon Allah?" He meant Ibn al-Sawda.(۱)

:For Allah's sake, how exactly does the above look like this one

وقال أبو إسحاق الفزاري عن شعبه عن سلمه بن كهيل عن أبى الزعراء عن زيد بن وهب أن سويد بن غفله دخل على على فى إمارته فقال انى مررت بن بنفر يذكرون أبا بكر وعمر يرون انک تضمر لهما مثل ذلک منهم عبد الله بن سبا وكان عبد الله أول من أظهر ذلک فقال على مالى ولهذا الخبيث الأسود ثم قال معاذ الله أضمر لهما الا الحسن الجميل ثم أرسل إلى عبد الله بن سبا فسيره إلى المدائن وقال لا يساكننى فى بلده ابدا ثم نهض إلى المنبر حتى اجتمع الناس فذكر القصه فى ثنائه عليهما بطوله وفى آخره الا ولا يبلغنى عن أحد يفضلنى عليهما الا جلدته حد المفترى

Abu Ishaq al-Fazari narrated from Shu'bah from Salamah b. Kuhayl from Abu al-Za'ra from Zayd b. Wahb that Suwayd b. Ghaflah entered upon 'Ali during his rule, and said, "I passed by a group who were mentioning Abu Bakr and 'Umar, claiming that you hold the same views towards them both. Among them was 'Abd Allah b. Saba, and he

was the first to manifest that. So, ‘Ali said, “What does this evil black MAN want from me?” Then he said, “I seek Allah’s refuge. My opinion of them both (i.e. Abu Bakr and ”.‘Umar) is nothing but good and beautiful

p: ٣٧

Abu Bakr Ahmad b. Abi Khaythamah Zuhayr b. Harb, Tarikh Ibn Abi Khaythamah - ١ (al-Faruq al-Hadithiyyah li al-Taba’ah wa al-Nashr; ١st edition, ١٤٢٤ H), vol. ٣, p. ١٧٧, ٤٣٥٩

Then he sent a messenger to ‘Abd Allah b. Saba and exiled him to al-Madain, and said, “He shall not live in the same town as me ever again”. Then he rushed to the pulpit and gathered the people, and delivered a long speech to praise them both (i.e. Abu Bakr and ‘Umar). At its end, he said, “Verily, if it reaches me that anyone places me above ”.them both, I will whip him with the whipping of a lying slanderer

Where is the similarity? Do they even resemble in any way or by any means? Apparently, there is NOTHING in common between them. Yet, we find some Sunni brothers referring to the first report as evidence that Abu Za’ra in the second is Hujayyah?! In fact, some of them go as fas as claiming that both reports are the ?same?!! How do these people reason

So, as we can see, many top Sunni rijal scholars contradicted the suggestion that Hujayyah had the nickname “Abu al-Za’ra”. Also, what Salamah narrated from “Abu al-Za’ra” was fundamentally different, in all aspects, from what he narrated from Hujayyah. These facts, obviously, sufficiently confirm that the “Abu al-Zar’a” in the .riwayah of al-Fazari was NOT Hujayyah b. ‘Adi

In that case, which of the three Abu Za’ras identified by al-Hafiz was the “Abu al-Za’ra” of al-Fazari’s report? Imam al-Mizzi helps us out here. He states about the first :of them

عبد الله بن هانئ الكندى، الأزدى أبو الزعراء الكوفى الكبير، من بنى البداء بن الحارث.

p: ٣٨

وهو خال سلمه بن كهيل.

روى عن: عبد الله بن مسعود، وعمر بن الخطاب. روى عنه: ابن أخته سلمه بن كهيل.

قال البخارى :لا يتابع فى حديثه. وقال على بن المدينى :عامه روايه أبى الزعراء، عن عبد الله بن مسعود، ولا أعلم أحدا روى عنه إلا سلمه بن كهيل، واسمه عبد الله بن هانئ .وقال النسائى نحو ذلك....

. وأما أبو الزعراء الأكبر هـذا. فلا تعرف له روايه، إلا عن ابن مسعود، وعمر بن الخطاب، ولا يعرف له راو، إلا سلمه بن كهيل، ولم يدركه سفيان بن عيينه، ولا أحد من أقرانه.

وذكره ابن حبان فى كتاب " الثقات "روى له الترمذى حديثا، والنسائى آخر.

Abd Allah b. Hani al-Kindi, al-Azdi, Abu al-Za’ra al-Kufi al-Kabir, from Banu al-Bada b. ‘al-Harith. He was the uncle of Salamah b. Kuhayl.

He narrated from ‘Abd Allah b. Mas’ud and ‘Umar b. al-Khattab. His nephew, Salamah b. Kuhayl, narrated from him.

Al-Bukhari said, “He is NOT followed in his hadith.” ‘Ali b. al-Madini said, “Most of the reports of Abu al-Za’ra are from ‘Abd Allah b. Mas’ud. I do not know anyone who narrated from him except Salamah b. Kuhayl, and his name was ‘Abd Allah b. Hani.” Al-Nasai said the like of that too....

With regards to this Abu al-Za’ra al-Akbar, there is NO known narration by him except from Ibn Mas’ud and ‘Umar b. al-Khattab, and there is NO known narrator from him except Salamah b. Kuhayl. Sufyan b. ‘Uyaynah never met him, nor did anyone else among his (i.e. Sufyan’s) contemporaries.

Ibn Hibban mentioned him in Kitab al-Thiqat. Al-Tirmidhi narrated

p: ٣٩

a single hadith from him, and al-Nasai narrated the other.(١)

Apparently, this is our guy!

:Concerning the second Abu al-Za’ra, al-Mizzi also submits

عمرو بن عمرو، ويقال: ابن عامر ابن مالك بن نضله الجشمى، أبو الزعراء الكوفى، ابن أخى أبى الأحوص الجشمى.

روى عن: عبيد الله بن عبد الله بن عتبه بن مسعود، وعكرمه مولى ابن عباس، وعمه أبى الأحوص عوف بن مالك بن نضله الجشمى.

روى عنه: سفيان الثورى وسماه عمرو بن عامر، وسفيان ابن عيينه، وعبيده بن حميد.

Amr b. ‘Amr, and he is also called Ibn ‘Amr, Ibn Malik b. Nadhlah al-Jashmi, Abu al-‘Za’ra al-Kufi, nephew of Abu al-Ahwas al-Jashmi.

He narrated from ‘Ubayd Allah b. ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Utbah b. Mas’ud, ‘Ikrimah freed slave of Ibn ‘Abbas, and his uncle Abu al-Ahwas ‘Awf b. Malik b. Nadhlah al-Jashmi.

Sufyan al-Thawri narrated from him and named him ‘Amr b. ‘Amir. Sufyan Ibn ‘Uyaynah also narrated from him, as well as ‘Ubaydah b. Humayd.(٢)

Without doubt, this is not the Abu al-Za’ra in the report on ‘Abd Allah b. Saba! Salamah did not narrate from him. The same was the case with the third Abu al-Za’ra:

يحيى بن الوليد بن المسير الطائى ثم السنبسى، أبو الزعراء الكوفى.

روى عن: سعيد بن عمرو بن أشوع، ومحل بن خليفه الطائى.

روى عنه: زيد بن الحباب، وسويد بن عمرو الكلبى، وأبو عاصم الضحاك بن مخلد، و عبد الرحمان بن مهدى، وأبو حميد عصام بن عمرو البغدادى، ويحيى بن المتوكل الباهلى.

Yahya b. al-Walid b. al-Musayyar al-Tai al-Sinbasi, Abu al-Za’ra al-Kufi.

He narrated from Sa’id b. ‘Amr b. Ashwa’ and Muhil b. Khalifah al-Tai.

And the following

١- Abu al-Hajjaj Jamal al-Din Yusuf al-Mizzi, Tahdhib al-Kamal fi Asma al-Rijal (Beirut

by Muasassat al-Risalah; ۴th edition, ۱۴۰۶ H) [annotator: Dr. Bashar 'Awad Ma'ruf], vol. ۱۶, pp. ۲۴۰-۲۴۲, ۳۶۲۷

۲- Abu al-Hajjaj Jamal al-Din Yusuf al-Mizzi, Tahdhib al-Kamal fi Asma al-Rijal (Beirut by Muasassat al-Risalah; ۱st edition, ۱۴۱۳ H) [annotator: Dr. Bashar 'Awad Ma'ruf], vol. ۲۲, p. ۱۶۶, ۴۴۱۷

narrated from him: Zayd b. al-Hubab, Suwayd b. 'Amr al-Kalbi, Abu 'Asim al-Dhahhak b. Mukhlid, 'Abd al-Rahman b. Mahdi, Abu Hamid 'Isam b. 'Amr al-Baghdadi, and Yahya b. al-Mutawakil al-Bahili.(۱)

Needless to say, "our guy" is only the first of them: 'Abd Allah b. Hani. Meanwhile, al-Mizzi has confirmed that "there is NO known narration by him except from Ibn Mas'ud and 'Umar b. al-Khattab." This reveals an 'illa (hidden defect) in all narrations by this Abu al-Za'ra from other than Ibn Mas'ud and 'Umar. All of them are disconnected and therefore dha'if, and so is this particular narration of his from Zayd b. Wahb as well!

A "counter-proof" often deployed by our opponents is this report, quoted by al-Hafiz:

وروى البرقانى فى اللفظ من طريق شعبه عن سلمه بن كهيل عن أبى الزعراء وعن زيد بن وهب أن سويد بن غفله دخل على على فى امارته فقال يا أمير المؤمنين انى مررت بنفر يذكرون أبا بكر وعمر الحديث. قال البرقانى أبو الزعراء هذا هو حجيه بن عدى وليس هو صاحب ابن مسعود ذاك اسمه عبد الله بن هانئ.

Al-Barqani narrated in the text from the route of Shu'bah from Salamah b. Kuhayl from Abu al-Za'ra, AND from Zayd b. Wahb that Suwayd b. Ghaflah entered upon 'Ali during his rule, and said, "O Amir al-Muminin! I passed by a group who were mentioning Abu Bakr and 'Umar." The hadith.(۲)

They argue that Salamah narrated from both Abu al-Za'ra and Zayd b. Wahb. As such, whether Abu al-Za'ra's report is dha'if or not

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۱- Ibid, vol. ۳۲, pp. ۳۰-۳۱, ۶۹۴۲

۲- Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib (Dar al-Fikr;

1st edition, ١۴٠۴ H), vol. ٢, p. ١٩٠, ٣٩٩

would be inconsequential, as there would be a separate route to establish the riwayah. However, al-Barqani (d. ۴٢۵ H) never met Shu'bah (d. ١۶٠ H), and the sanad between them is unknown. Therefore, it is impossible to rely upon this report of al-Barqani. Most probably, one of the unknown narrators in the truncated chain muddled up the isnad. So, basically, our opponents have no valid objection, and the riwayah of Abu al-Za'ra 'Abd Allah b. Hani from Zayd b. Wahb is dha'if.

In addition, the riwayah is equally, historically inaccurate. The report, for example, is quick to point out that the first ever human being to "mention" Abu Bakr and 'Umar negatively was 'Abd Allah b. Saba. This, however, is untrue! Amir al-Muminin himself had earlier described both Abu Bakr and 'Umar with shocking words. Imam Muslim (d. ٢۶١ H) quotes 'Umar saying to both Imam 'Ali and 'Abbas:

فلما توفى رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قال أبو بكر أنا ولى رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم .... فرأيتماه كاذبا آثما غادرا خائنا والله يعلم إنه لصادق بار راشد تابع للحق ثم توفى أبو بكر وأنا ولى رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم وولى أبا بكر فرأيتمانى كاذبا آثما غادرا خائنا

When the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, died, Abu Bakr said: "I am the wali of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him.".... So both of you ('Ali and 'Abbas) thought him (i.e. Abu Bakr) to be a liar, sinful, a traitor and dishonest.

And Allah knows that he was really truthful, pious, rightly-guided and a follower of the truth. Abu Bakr died and I became the wali of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and the wali of Abu Bakr. So both of you thought me to be a liar, sinful, a traitor and dishonest.(١)

Amir al-Muminin declared both Abu Bakr and 'Umar to be traitors, sinful and dishonest liars! This, of course, was during the lifetimes of both of them, long before 'Abd Allah b. Saba could ever have surfaced.

Besides, what "praise" exactly would Amir al-Muminin have had for Abu Bakr and

‘Umar in view of his extremely negative opinions of them? It is simply illogical to assume that Amir al-Muminin would ever consider people whom he thought to be !“liars, traitors, sinful and dishonest” as better than himself

:What seals the series of fallacies in the report is its last sentence

Verily, if it reaches me that anyone places me above them both, I will whip him with“ ”.the whipping of a lying slanderer

Many of the Sahabah, radhiyallahu ‘anhum, and Tabi’in actually considered him to be the best of the entire Ummah after the Messenger of Allah, and he never condemned :or punished them. Imam Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (d. ۴۶۳ H), among others, submits

وروى عن سلمان وأبى ذر والمقداد وخباب وجابر وأبى سعيد الخدرى وزيد بن الأرقم أن على بن أبى طالب رضى الله عنه أول من أسلم وفضله هؤلاء على غيره

Salman, Abu Dharr, al-Miqdad, Khabab, Jabir, Abu Sa’id al-Khudri

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۱- Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. ۳, p. ۱۳۷۶, ۱۷۵۷

and Zayd b. Arqam narrated that ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was the first to accept Islam, and they considered him the most superior (among the (Sahabah).(۱)

:Al-Hafiz adds about another Sahabi, Abu al-Tufayl, radhiyallahu ‘anhu

قال أبو عمر كان يعترف بفضل أبى بكر وعمر لكنه يقدم عليا

Abu ‘Umar said: He accepted the merit of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar but he considered ‘Ali (to be the most superior.(۲)

Did ‘Ali ever reproach Khabab, Jabir, Abu Sa’id al-Khudri, Zayd b. Arqam and Abu al-

!"Tufayl or anyone like them? The answer is a loud "no

Narration Seven

:Imam Abu Nu'aym al-Isfahani (d. ۴۳۰ H) in his al-Hilya records the last report

حدثنا إبراهيم بن محمد ثنا عبد الله ثنا يوسف بن أسباط ثنا محمد بن عبد العزيز التيمى الكوفى عن مغيره عن أم موسى قالت بلغ عليا أن ابن سبأ يفضله على أبى بكر وعمر فهم على بقتله فقيل له أتقتل رجلا إنما أجلك وفضلك فقال لا جرم لا يساكننى فى بلده أنا فيها قال عبدالله بن خبيق فحدثت به الهيثم بن جميل فقال لقد نفى ببلد بالمدائن إلى الساعه

Ibrahim b. Muhammad – 'Abd Allah – Yusuf b. Asbat – Muhammad b. 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Tamimi al-Kufi – Mughirah – Umm Musa, who said:

It reached 'Ali that Ibn Saba was placing him (i.e. 'Ali) in merits and virtues above Abu Bakr and 'Umar. So, he decided to kill him. But, it was said to him, "Will you kill a man who only thinks highly of you and considers you superior?" Then, he said, "Surely, he

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۱- Abu 'Umar Yusuf b. 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Barr b. 'Asim al-Nimri al-Qurtubi, al-Isti'ab fi Ma'rifat al-Ashab (Beirut: Dar al-Jil; ۱st edition, ۱۴۱۲ H) [annotator: 'Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi], vol. ۳, pp. ۱۰۹۰, ۱۸۵۵

۲- Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, al-Isabah fi Tamyiz al-Sahabah (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; ۱st edition, ۱۴۱۵ H) [annotators: Shaykh 'Adil Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Mawjud and Shaykh 'Ali Muhammad Ma'udh], vol. ۷, p. ۱۹۳, ۱۰۱۶۶

".shall not live with me in the same town

'Abd Allah b. Khabiq narrated from al-Haytham b. Jamil who said: "He was permanently exiled to a town in al-Madain."(۱)

:Concerning Yusuf b. Asbat, 'Allamah al-Albani says

ويوسف بن أسباط؛ ضعيف أيضاً.

Yusuf b. Asbat is dha'if too.(۲)

:Elsewhere, he comments about a sanad containing Yusuf's name

قلت: وهـذا سـند ضـعيف من أجـل يوسف بن أسـباط قـال أبو حـاتم: كـان رجلا عابـدا، دفن كتبه، وهو يغلط كثيرا، وهو رجل صالح، لا يحتج به، كما في " الجرح " (۴ / ۲ / ۴۱۸)

I say: This chain is dha'if, due to Yusuf b. Asbat. Abu Hatim said: "He was a devout worshipper. He buried his books, and he used to make A LOT of mistakes, and he was (a righteous man. He is NOT accepted as a hujjah" as stated in al-Jarh (۴/۲/۴۱۸).(۳

Also, Mughirah in the chain is a mudalis, and has narrated in an 'an-'an manner. Al-:Hafiz submits

المغيره بن مقسم بكسر الميم الضبى مولاهم أبو هشام الكوفى الأعمى ثقه متقن إلا أنه كان يدلس ولا سيما عن إبراهيم

Al-Mughirah b. Miqsam al-Dhabi, their freed slave, Abu Hisham al-Kufi, the Blind: Thiqah (trustworthy), precise, except that he used to do tadlis, especially from (Ibrahim.(۴

:Allamah al-Albani too says about him'

فلا- أدرى كيف غفـل عنهـا الـذهبى وهو نفسه قـد أورد المغيره هـذا فى "منظومته" فى المدلسـين؟! وهى معروفه مطبوعه عـده طبعـات، وذكره فيهم غيره من الحفاظ المتقـدمين والمتأخرين، وأورده خاتمتهم العسـقلانى فى الطبقه الثالثه منهم الـذين أكثروا التدليس، فلم يحتج الأئمه من أحاديثهم إلا بما صرحوا فيه بالسماع

I do not know

۱- Abu Na'im Ahmad b. 'Abd Allah al-Isfahani, Hilyah al-Awliya wa Tabaqat al-Asfiya (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi; ۴th edition, ۱۴۰۵ H), vol. ۸, p. ۲۵۳

۲- Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Dha'ifah wa al-Mawdhu'ah wa Atharihah al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma'arif; ۱st edition, ۱۴۱۲ H), vol. ۱۱, p. ۱۱۸, ۵۰۷۳

۳- Ibid, vol. ۱, p. ۳۲۵, ۱۷۵

۴ - Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah

al-‘Ilmiyyah; ٢nd edition, ١٤١٥ H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. ٢, p. ٢٠٨, ٦٨٧٥

how al-Dhahabi missed it, while he personally has included this al-Mughirah in his Manzumah among the mudalisin (i.e. those who do tadlis)?! And it is well-known, published several times. Others from the classical and later hadith scientists also included him (i.e. al-Mughirah) among them (i.e. mudalisin). The last of them, al-‘Asqalani, included him (i.e. al-Mughirah) in the third tabaqat among them, those who did tadlis A LOT. Therefore, the Imams do not accept their ahadith as hujjah (except what they explicitly transmit with sima’.(١)

The last defect in the sanad is Umm Musa, the main narrator herself. Al-Hafiz declares about her:

أم موسى سريه على قيل اسمها فاخته وقيل حبيبه مقبوله

Umm Musa, mistress of ‘Ali. It is said that her name was Fakhtah or Habibah: (Maqbulah (i.e. accepted only when seconded).(٢)

While analyzing another riwayah of Mughirah from the same Umm Musa, ‘Allamah al-Albani also says:

قلت: وفيه نظر من وجهين:

الأول: أن أم موسى هذه، لم تثبت عدالتها وضبطها. وقد أوردها الذهبى نفسه فى "فصل النسوه المجهولات" من "الميزان"، وقال فيها: "تفرد عنها مغيره بن مقسم. قال الدارقطنى: يخرج حديثها اعتباراً". ولذلك لم يوثقها الحافظ فى "التقريب" بل قال فيها: "مقبوله". يعنى: عند المتابعه....

والآخر: أن المغيره – وهو ابن مقسم الضبى – وإن كان ثقه متقناً؛ إلا أنه كان يدلس؛ كما قال الحافظ، وقد عنعنه.

I say: These are two problems with it:

The first: is that this Umm Musa, her ‘adalah (uprightness) and truthfulness are NOT established. Al-Dhahabi has himself mentioned her in the “Chapter on Majhulah (Unknown) Women” in al-Mizan, and he said concerning

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۱- Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Dha'ifah wa al-Mawdhu'ah wa Atharihah al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma'arif; 1st edition, ۱۴۱۲ H), vol. ۱۳, p. ۶۳۳, ۶۲۸۹.

۲- Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, ۱۴۱۵ H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. ۲, p. ۶۷۳, ۸۸۲۰

her: "Mughirah b. Miqsam was the only one who narrated from her. Al-Daraqutni said: 'Her ahadith are recorded for support purposes.'" This is why al-Hafiz in al-Taqrib did NOT declare her thiqah (trustworthy). Rather, he said concerning her "maqbulah", that is (she is accepted) where she is seconded.

The other: is that al-Mughirah – and he was Ibn Miqsam al-Dhabi – even though he was thiqah (trustworthy), precise, except that he used to do tadlis, as al-Hafiz stated. And he has narrated it in an 'an-'an manner.(۱)

The bottomline is that the report of Abu Na'im is dha'if jiddan (very weak). It has several serious defects in it: Yusuf b. Asbat is dha'if; al-Mughirah is a mudalis and has narrated in an 'an-'an manner; and Umm Musa is majhulah (unknown) or maqbulah and has NOT been seconded in her report. Besides, there were many of the Sahabah who considered Amir al-Muminin to have been superior to Abu Bakr and 'Umar – and he never punished or killed them! This exposes the clear fallacy of the fairytale from Abu Na'im.

As things stand, these are the only seven reports in the Sunni books which mention 'Abd Allah b. Saba explicitly, and all of them are both very unreliable and blatantly false.

۲. Tracing The Fairytale: Explicit Athar Naming 'Abd Allah Al-Sabai

There is only one report in the Sunni books mentioning a man named 'Abd Allah al-Sabai. This is the riwayah as documented by Imam Ibn Abi 'Asim (d. ۲۸۷ H):

حدثنا أبو بكر بن أبى شيبه حدثنا محمد بن الحسن الأسدى حدثنا هارون

۱- Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Dha'ifah wa al-Mawdhu'ah wa Atharihah al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma'arif; ۱st edition, ۱۴۱۲ H), vol. ۱۰, p. ۶۴۹, ۴۹۴۵

بن صالح عن الحارث بن عبد الرحمن عن أبى الجلاس قال سمعت عليا يقول لعبدالله السبائى ويلك ما أفضى إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بشيء كتمه أحدا من الناس ولقد سمعته يقول إن بين يدى الساعه ثلاثين كذابا وإنك أحدهم

Abu Bakr b. Abi Shaybah – Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Asadi – Harun b. Salih – al-Harith b. 'Abd al-Rahman – Abu al-Jalas:

I heard 'Ali saying to 'Abd Allah al-Sabai: "Woe to you! The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, did not inform me of anything which he hid from anyone among mankind. I had heard him (i.e. the Prophet) saying, 'Before the Hour, there will be thirty liars'. Verily, you are one of them."(۱)

'Allamah al-Albani (d. ۱۴۲۰ H) has this verdict on it:

إسناده ضعيف، أبو الجلاس كوفى مجهول كما فى " التقريب ". وهارون بن صالح مجهول أيضا، وفى " التقريب ": مستور.

والحديث أخرجه أبو يعلى من طريقين آخرين عن الأسدى به

Its chain is dha'if. Abu al-Jalas Kufi is majhul (unknown), as stated in al-Taqrib. Harun b. Salih too is majhul. In al-Taqrib, he is called mastur (hidden).

And the hadith is recorded by Abu Ya'la through two other chains from al-Asadi with it.(۲)

So, let us find out the other two chains recorded by Imam Abu Ya'la (d. ۳۰۷ H). This is the first:

حدثنا أبو كريب محمد بن العلاء حدثنا محمد بن الحسن الأسدى حدثنا هارون بن صالح الهمدانى عن الحارث بن عبد الرحمن عن أبى الجلاس قال سمعت عليا يقول لعبد الله السبائى : ويلك ! والله ما

۱- Abu Bakr b. Abi 'Asim, Ahmad b. 'Amr b. al-Dhahhak b. Mukhlid al-Shaybani, Kitab al-Sunnah (al-Maktab al-Islami; ۱st edition, ۱۴۰۰ H) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. ۱, p. ۴۶۲, ۹۸۲

۲- Ibid

أفضى إلى بشىء كتمه أحدا من الناس ولقد سمعته يقول : إن بين يدى الساعه ثلاثين كذابا وإنك لأحدهم

Abu Kurayb Muhammad b. al-'Ala – Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Asadi – Harun b. Salih al-Hamdani – al-Harith b. 'Abd al-Rahman – Abu al-Jalas:

I heard 'Ali saying to 'Abd Allah al-Sabai: "Woe to you! I swear by Allah, he (i.e. the Prophet) did not inform me of anything which he hid from anyone among mankind. I had heard him (i.e. the Prophet) saying, 'Before the Hour, there will be thirty liars'. Verily, you are one of them."(۱)

The annotator, Shaykh Dr. Asad comments:

إسناده ضعيف

Its chain is dha'if.(۲)

What about the second? Abu Ya'la says:

حدثنا أبو بكر بن أبى شيبه حدثنا محمد بن الحسن بإسناده مثله

Abu Bakr b. Abi Shaybah narrated to us – Muhammad b. al-Hasan narrated the like of it to us with his chain.(۳)

Apparently, this is the same chain from Ibn Abi Asim. Abu Bakr b. Abi Shaybah narrated it, and has identified "his chain" simply as – Harun b. Salih al-Hamdani – al-Harith b. 'Abd al-Rahman – Abu al-Jalas. It is indeed very strange that 'Allamah al-Albani refers to the chains in Musnad Abu Ya'la as "two other chains", even though the isnad of Ibn Abi Asim, and the two chains of Abu Ya'la, are all one and the same!

We know already that the report is unreliable. So, the alleged event never took place. Amir al-Muminin, 'alaihi al-salam, never said those words to any 'Abd Allah al-Sabai. But, there are still

p: ۴۹

۱- Abu Ya'la Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muthanna al-Mawsili al-Tamimi, Musnad (Damascus: Dar al-Mamun li al-Turath; ۱st edition, ۱۴۰۴ H) [annotator: Dr. Husayn Salim Asad], vol. ۱, p. ۳۴۹, ۴۴۹

۲- Ibid

۳- Ibid, vol. ۱, p. ۳۵۰, ۴۵۰

other issues we would like to address.

The athar does NOT mention "'Abd Allah b. Saba". It only says "'Abd Allah al-Sabai", which literally means "'Abd Allah from the offspring of Saba". Obviously, 'Abd Allah b. Saba could rightly be also called 'Abd Allah al-Sabai. But, there were other 'Abd Allahs as well, from the same lineage of Saba, who were also known with that title. Imam al-Dhahabi (d. ۷۴۸ H) tells us about one of them:

(وقعه النهروان)

وفيها سارت الخوارج لحرب على، فكانت بينهم وقعه النهروان، وكان على الخوارج عبد الله بن وهب السبائى، فهزمهم على وقتل أكثرهم، وقتل ابن وهب.

The Incident of al-Nahrawan

In it, the Khawarij marched to fight a war against 'Ali. So, the Incident of al-Nahrawan was between them. The head of the Khawarij was 'Abd Allah b. Wahb al-Sabai. 'Ali defeated them and killed most of them, and he killed Ibn Wahb.(۱)

As such, "'Abd Allah al-Sabai" could well have been a reference to this Kharijite, or to some other "'Abd Allah" from the offspring of Saba!

However, there is some evidence that the " 'Abd Allah al-Sabai" in the report of Abu

Ya’la was actually ‘Abd Allah b. Saba, and none else. Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. ۷۷۴ H) :copies

وقال الحافظ أبو يعلى : حـدثنا أبو كريب، حـدثنا محمد بن الحسن الأسدى، حدثنا هارون بن صالح الهمدانى ، عن الحرص بن عبد الرحمن، عن أبى الجلاس قال : سـمعت علياً يقول لعبد الله بن سـبأ ، ويلك والله ما أفضى إلىَّ بشىء كتمه أحداً من الناس ، ولقد

p: ۵۰

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۱ - Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Uthman al-Dhahabi, Tarikh al-Islam wa Wafiyat al-Mashahir wa al-A’lam (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-‘Arabi; ۱st edition, ۱۴۰۷ H) [Dr. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salam Tadmiri], vol. ۳, p. ۵۸۸

سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول : إن بين يدى الساعه ثلاثين كذاباً وإنك لأحدهم .

Al-Hafiz Abu Ya’la said: Abu Kurayb – Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Asadi – Harun b. Salih al-Hamdani – al-Hars b. ‘Abd al-Rahman – Abu al-Jalas:

I heard ‘Ali saying to ‘Abd Allah b. Saba: “Woe to you! I swear by Allah, he did not inform me of anything which he hid from anyone among mankind. I had heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying, ‘Before the Hour, there will be thirty liars’. Verily, you are one of them.”(۱)

:Al-Hafiz too submits

وقال أبو يعلى الموصـلى فى مسنده ثنا أبو كريب ثنا محمد بن الحسن الأسدى ثنا هارون بن صالح عن الحارث بن عبد الرحمن عن أبى الجلاس سـمعت عليا يقول لعبد الله بن سبا والله ما أفضى إلى بشئ كتمه أحدا من الناس ولقد سمعت يقول إن بين يدى الساعه ثلاثين كذابا وانك لأحدهم

Abu Ya’la al-Mawsili said in his Musnad: Abu Kurayb – Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Asadi – Harun b. Salih – al-Harith b. ‘Abd al-Rahman – Abu al-Jalas:

I heard ‘Ali saying to ‘Abd Allah b. Saba: “I swear by Allah, he did not inform me of anything which he hid from anyone among mankind. I had heard (him), saying, ‘Before the Hour, there will be thirty liars’. Verily, you are one of them.”(۲)

Yet, even these facts do not help the Sunni claims, as all these reports have the same .dha'if chain

Tracing The Fairytale: Explicit Athar Naming Ibn Al-Sawda .۳

point

According to Sunni 'ulama, 'Abd Allah b. Saba was "well-known" as

p: ۵۱

Abu al-Fida Ibn Kathir al-Dimashqi, al-Nihayah fi al-Fitan wa al-Malahim (Beirut: - ۱ Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; ۱st edition, ۱۴۰۸ H) [annotator: Prof. 'Abduh al-Shafi'i], vol. ۱, p. ۵۰. We had earlier very strongly criticized this rendition of the hadith by Ibn Kathir. However, upon further researches, we accept the possibility that he had only used a .now extinct version of the book of Abu Ya'la. He has been corroborated by al-Hafiz Shihab al-Din Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Lisan al-Mizan - ۲ (Beirut: Manshurat Muasassat al-A'lami li al-Matbu'at; ۲nd edition, ۱۳۹۰ H), vol. ۳, p. ۲۸۹-۲۹۰, ۱۲۲۵

Ibn al-Sawda – the son of the black woman. Imam Ibn al-Athir (d. ۶۳۰ H), for instance, :submits

وكان عبد الله بن سبأ المعروف بابن السوداء

(He was 'Abd Allah b. Saba, well-known as Ibn al-Sawda.(۱

The only existing testimony concerning the colour of his mother, however, is the mawdu' (fabricated) report of Yazid al-Faq'asi. Therefore, there really is absolutely NO evidence that 'Abd Allah b. Saba had a black mother. As a result, there is no basis .for naming him Ibn al-Sawda or for suggesting that he could be called that

Secondly, there is equally no reliable proof that the contemporaries of 'Abd Allah b. Saba ever called him Ibn al-Sawda. Rather, his own existence at all is not even established through any authentic chain in the Sunni books! Logic demands that whichever Sunni wants to claim that 'Abd Allah b. Saba was Ibn al-Sawda, or that he

:was well-known as that, must do the following

Provide at least a single authentic, explicit Sunni report proving the existence of a .١ .man called ‘Abd Allah b. Saba

Provide at least a single authentic, explicit Sunni riwayah showing that the man .٢ .named ‘Abd Allah b. Saba was addressed as Ibn al-Sawda by his contemporaries

The truth is – no Sunni has ever been able to do either of the above, and no Sunni will be able to do so till the Day of al-Qiyamah. Therefore, as things stand, there is no valid Sunni evidence that a man named ‘Abd Allah b. Saba ever existed, or

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Ibn al-Athir, Abu al-Hasan ‘Izz al-Din ‘Ali b. Abi al-Karam Muhammad b. Muhammad -١ b. ‘Abd al-Karim b. ‘Abd al-Wahid, al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh (Beirut: Dar Sadir; ١٣٨٥ H), vol. ٣, pp. ١٤٤-١٤٥

that such a man was ever called Ibn al-Sawda by those who knew him. With this background fact, we are good to proceed to some Sunni reports on the unknown son !of the black woman

Narration One

:Imam Ibn Asakir (d. ٥٧١ H) helps us with the first of them

قال ونا سيف عن أبي حارثه وأبي عثمان قالا- لما قدم ابن السوداء مصر عجمهم واستخلاهم واستخلوه وعرض لهم بالكفر فأبعدوه وعرض لهم بالشقاق فأطمعوه فبدأ فطعن على عمرو بن العاص وقال ما باله أكثركم عطاء ورزقا ألا ننصب رجلا من قريش يسوى بيننا فاستحلوا ذلك منه وقالوا كيف نطيق ذلك مع عمرو وهو رجل العرب قال تستعفون منه ثم يعمل عملنا ويظهر الائتمار بالمعروف والطعن فلا يرده علينا أحد

:Sayf – Abu Harithah and Abu ‘Uthman

When Ibn al-Sawda arrived in Egypt, he tested them. He was delighted with them and they were delighted with him. He presented kufr (disbelief) to them, and they distanced themselves from it. He then suggested sedition to them and they gave him

hope. Then he began and slandered 'Amr b. al-As, saying, "Why is his pension and salary the largest among you?" Will a man from Quraysh not be put forward to settle the matter between us?" They were pleased with that from him, and said, "How can we achieve this with 'Amr when he is the man of the Arabs?" He said, "Seek his dismissal! Then we will play our role and begin to publicly command the good and to defame. At that time, no one will

p: ٥٣

(hold us back."(١)

In this chain again is Sayf b. 'Umar. We will only remind ourselves of the words of :'Allamah al-Albani (d. ١٤٢٠ H) concerning him

قلت: وفى هذا نظر، فإن أكثر الطرق المشار إليها مدارها على سيف بن عمر والواقدى وهما كذابان

I say: There is an error in this, for most of the indicated chains, their pivot is Sayf b. ('Umar and al-Waqidi, and they both were LIARS.(٢

.As such, the sanad is mawdu' and the riwayah is thereby a fabrication

Ibn Asakir apparently assumes that the "Ibn al-Sawda" in the report was 'Abd Allah b. Saba – which is why he has placed the riwayah under his biography of the latter. However, there is no valid proof that 'Abd Allah b. Saba had a black mother, to begin with! Even Ibn Asakir makes no attempt to provide any, either! Meanwhile, decency and common sense dictate that whosoever seeks to rely upon the above report to prove the existence of 'Abd Allah b. Saba – as Ibn Asakir did - must first do the :following

١. Bring convincing, solid proof that there was a man - at that period in time - named .'Abd Allah b. Saba who had a black mother

٢. Supply reliable evidence that the black mother of this man was well-known among ."the people, and was widely recognized as "the black woman

٣. Provide an authentically transmitted eye-witness testimony which establishes that

.the man - ‘Abd Allah b. Saba - was also known as Ibn al-Sawda

We are

۱- Abu al-Qasim ‘Ali b. al-Hasan b. Habat Allah b. ‘Abd Allah, Ibn Asakir al-Shafi’i, Tarikh Madinah Dimashq (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; ۱۴۱۵ H) [annotator: ‘Ali Shiri], vol. ۲۹, p. ۶

۲- Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma’arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’; ۱st edition, ۱۴۱۵ H), vol. ۳, pp. ۱۰۱-۱۰۲, ۱۱۱۰

absolutely certain that no creature can fulfil any of the above conditions till the Hour! As such, we believe that anyone who claims that Ibn al-Sawda in the fabricated riwayah was ‘Abd Allah b. Saba (whoever that was) – apparently with no valid evidence at all – is a bigot who only plays dirty games with the truth. Undoubtedly, there is zero evidence to establish that ‘Abd Allah b. Saba was ever referred to or known as Ibn al-Sawda by any of his contemporaries. Therefore, it is clearly impossible to connect the above tale of Sayf to him. So, the report is completely .useless and irrelevant, since it is strictly about a hopelessly unidentifiable character

Narration Two

:With the collapse of the first riwayah, Imam Ibn Asakir takes us to another

قرأنا على أبى عبد الله يحيى بن الحسن عن أبى الحسين بن الآبنوسى أنا أحمد بن عبيد بن الفضل وعن أبى نعيم محمد بن عبد الواحد بن عبد العزيز أنا على بن محمد بن خزفه قالا نا محمد بن الحسن نا ابن أبى خيثمه نا محمد بن عباد نا سفيان عن عمار الدهنى قال سمعت أبا الطفيل يقول رأيت المسيب بن نجبه أتى به ملببه يعنى ابن السوداء وعلى على المنبر فقال على ما شأنه فقال يكذب على الله وعلى رسوله

Abu ‘Abd Allah Yahya b. al-Hasan – Abu al-Husayn b. al-Abnusi – Ahmad b. ‘Ubayd b. al-Fadhl and Abu Na’im Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahid b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz – ‘Ali b. Muhammad b. Khazafah and Muhammad b. al-Hasan – Ibn Abi Khaythamah – Muhammad

:b. 'Abbad – Sufyan – Ammar al-Duhni – Abu al-Tufayl

I saw al-Musayyab b. Najabah, bringing him – that was Ibn al-Sawda - while 'Ali was on the pulpit. So, 'Ali said, "What is his problem?" He replied, "He lies upon Allah and (upon His Messenger."(۱

This report suffers from the same fatal defect as the first. We do not know who this Ibn al-Sawda was, and there is no reliable Sunni riwayah to connect him to 'Abd Allah b. Saba. Meanwhile, even if we assumed, for the sake of argument, that he was Ibn Saba, the athar still does not prove any of the primary Sunni claims about him. For instance, it does not prove that he was negative towards Abu Bakr and 'Umar, or that he believed in the succession or 'isma (sinlessness) of Amir al-Muminin 'Ali, 'alaihi al-salam. It also says nothing about 'Abd Allah b. Saba's alleged belief in al-raj'ah or his claimed participation in the bloody overthrow of 'Uthman b. 'Affan. It is therefore .basically an utterly valueless report, as long as Ibn Saba is concerned

Narration Three

:Imam Ibn Abi Khaythamah (d. ۲۷۹ H) reports

حدثنا محمد بن عباد المكى قال نا سفيان قال نا عبد الجبار بن عباس الهمدانى عن سلمه عن حجيه بن عدى الكندى :رأيت عليا على المنبر وهو يقول من يعذرنى من هذا الحميت الأسود الذى يكذب على الله يعنى ابن السوداء

Muhammad b. 'Abbad – Sufyan – 'Abd al-Jabbar b. 'Abbas al-Hamdani – Salamah – :Hujayyah b. 'Adi al-Kindi

I saw 'Ali upon the pulpit

Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. al-Hasan b. Habat Allah b. 'Abd Allah, Ibn Asakir al-Shafi'i, - ۱ Tarikh Madinah Dimashq (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; ۱۴۱۵ H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. ۲۹, p. ۷

and he was saying, "Who will excuse me of this evil black container, who tells lies upon

(Allah?" He meant Ibn al-Sawda.(١)

:Imam Ibn Asakir has also transmitted the same riwayah

أنبأنا أبو عبد الله محمد بن أحمد بن إبراهيم بن الخطاب أنا أبو القاسم على بن محمد بن على الفارسى ح وأخبرنا أبو محمد عبد الرحمن بن أبى الحسن بن إبراهيم الدارانى أنا سهل بن بشر أنا أبو الحسن على بن منير بن أحمد بن منير الخلال قالا أنا القاضى أبو الطاهر محمد بن أحمد بن عبد الله الذهلى نا أبو أحمد بن عبدوس نا محمد بن عباد نا سفيان نا عبد الجبار بن العباس الهمدانى عن سلمه بن كهيل عن حجيه بن عدى الكندى قال رأيت عليا كرم الله وجهه وهو على المنبر وهو يقول من يعذرنى من هذا الحميت الأسود الذى يكذب على الله ورسوله يعنى ابن السوداء

Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Ibrahim b. al-Khattab – Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Farisi; AND Abu Muhammad 'Abd al-Rahman b. Abi al-Hasan b. Ibrahim al-Darani – Sahl b. Bishr – Abu al-Hasan 'Ali b. Munir b. Ahmad b. Munir al-Khalal – al-Qadhi Abu al-Tahir Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Abd Allah al-Dhuhli – Abu Ahmad b. 'Abdus – Muhammad b. 'Abbad – Sufyan – 'Abd al-Jabbar b. al-'Abbas al-:Hamdani – Salamah b. Kuhayl – Hujayyah b. 'Adi al-Kindi

I saw 'Ali, karamallah wajhah, while he was upon the pulpit and he was saying, "Who will excuse me of this evil black container, who tells lies upon Allah and

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Abu Bakr Ahmad b. Abi Khaythamah Zuhayr b. Harb, Tarikh Ibn Abi Khaythamah -١ (al-Faruq al-Hadithiyyah li al-Taba'ah wa al-Nashr; ١st edition, ١٤٢٤ H), vol. ٣, p. ١٧٧, ٤٣٥٩

(His Messenger?" He meant Ibn al-Sawda.(١)

This riwayah is inconsequential as well. First, the phrase "He meant Ibn al-Sawda" is an interpolation (idraj) of one of the narrators. But, who was it? It could have been anyone from Muhammad b. 'Abbad to Hujayyah. There is no explicit proof to establish that the interpolation came from Hujayyah, the eye-witness, and not from any of the sub-narrators. As such, there is no sufficient basis to rely upon it in identifying whoever 'Ali allegedly called an "evil black container". Moreover, even if we assumed,

for the sake of argument, that it was Hujayyah who made the identification, then the report would still be of zero value. The only thing it would have done in such a case is to show that Amir al-Muminin once called one Ibn al-Sawda a "black container" – nothing more, nothing less. Meanwhile, the exact identity of this Ibn al-Sawda remains unknown through any reliable Sunni report. Therefore, the report would still .be redundant and unusable

Narration Four

:This is the fourth "evidence" of Imam Ibn Asakir, allegedly about 'Abd Allah b. Saba

أخبرنا أبو بكر أحمـد بن المظفر بن الحسـين بن سوسن التمار فى كتابه وأخبرنى أبو طاهر محمـد بن محمد بن عبد الله السـنجى بمرو عنه أنا أبو على بن شاذان نا أبو بكر محمد بن جعفر بن محمد الآدمى نا أحمد بن موسـى الشـطوى نا أحمد بن عبد الله بن يونس نا أبو الأحوص عن مغيره عن سباط قال بلغ عليا أن ابن السوداء ينتقص أبا بكر وعمر فدعا به

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۱ - Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. al-Hasan b. Habat Allah b. 'Abd Allah, Ibn Asakir al-Shafi'i, Tarikh Madinah Dimashq (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; ۱۴۱۵ H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. ۲۹, p. ۸

ودعا بالسيف أو قال فهم بقتله فكلم فيه فقال لا يساكنى ببلد أنا فيه قال فسيره إلى المدائن

Abu Bakr Ahmad b. al-Muzaffar b. al-Husayn b. Susan al-Tamar – Abu Tahir Muhammad b. Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Sinji – Abu 'Ali b. Shadhan – Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Ja'far b. Muhammad al-Adami – Ahmad b. Musa al-Shatawi – Ahmad b. :'Abd Allah b. Yunus – Abu al-Ahwas – Mughirah – Sabat

It reached 'Ali that Ibn al-Sawda was reviling Abu Bakr and 'Umar. So, he sent for him and called for the sword, or he decided to kill him. But, he was persuaded against it. Then he said, "He cannot live with me in the same town". So, he banished him to al-Madain.(۱)

.This report is very dha'if

Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (d. ۴۶۳ H) has done a tarjamah for Abu Bakr Muhammad b.

Ja’far b. Muhammad al-Adami but has mentioned no tawthiq for him whatsoever concerning his narrations. None exists in any other Sunni book either. By contrast, al-Baghdadi has actually recorded this under the said tarjamah:

قال محمد بن أبى الفوارس سنه ثمان وأربعين وثلاثمائه فيها مات محمد بن جعفر الادمى وكان قد خلط فيما حدث

Muhammad b. Abi al-Fawaris said: “In the year ٣٤٨ H, Muhammad b. Ja’far died, and he used to mix things up in what he narrated.”(٢)

This makes him dha’if as a narrator.

Besides, the main narrator of the report too, Sabat, is completely unknown in the Sunni books of rijal. No mention of him whatsoever is made. So, he is perfectly

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١- Ibid, vol. ٢٩, p. ٩

٢- Abu Bakr Ahmad b. ‘Ali al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah), vol. ٢, p. ١٤٩, ٥٦٥

majhul.

But, Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. ٧٢٨ H) thinks it is not over yet:

فروى أبو الأحوص عن مغيره عن شباك عن إبراهيم قال: بلغ على بن أبى طالب أن عبد الله بن السوداء ينتقص أبا بكر وعمر فهم بقتله فقيل له: تقتل رجلا يدعو إلى حبكم أهل البيت؟ فقال: "لا يساكننى فى دار أبدا".

وفى روايه عن شباك قال: بلغ عليا أن ابن السوداء يبغض أبا بكر وعمر قال: فدعاه ودعا بالسيف أو قال: فهم بقتله فكلم فيه فقال: "لا يساكننى ببلد أنا فيه" فنفاه إلى المدائن وهذا محفوظ عن أبى الأحوص وقد رواه النجاد وابن بطه واللالكائى وغيرهم

ومراسيل إبراهيم جياد لا يظهر على رضى الله عنه أنه يريد قتل رجل إلا وقتله حلال عنده ويشبه والله أعلم أن يكون إنما تركه خوف الفتنه بقتله

Abu al-Ahwas narrated from Mughirah from Shibak from Ibrahim that he said, “It reached ‘Ali b. Abi Talib that ‘Abd Allah b. al-Sawda was reviling Abu Bakr and ‘Umar. Then he decided to kill him. But it was said to him, ‘Will you kill a man who calls

towards love of you, Ahl al-Bayt?' Then he said, 'He can never again stay with me in the same house.'"

In another report from Shibak, he said: "It reached 'Ali that Ibn al-Sawda hated Abu Bakr and 'Umar. Then he sent for him and called for the sword, or he decided to kill him. But he was dissuaded from it. As a result, he said, 'He can not stay in the same town with me.' So, he banished him to

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al-Madain." This is accurately preserved (mahfuz) from Abu al-Ahwas, and al-Najad, Ibn Battah, al-Lalikai and others have recorded it.

And the marasil (i.e. disconnected narrations) of Ibrahim are good (jiyyad).(۱)

The pretensions of Ibn Taymiyyah nonetheless, both reports are unreliable! Imam Ibn Hibban (d. ۳۵۴ H) tells us why:

إبراهيم النخعى وهو إبراهيم بن يزيد بن عمرو بن الأسود أبو عمران كان مولده سنه خمسين ومات سنه خمس أو ست وتسعين

Ibrahim al-Nakha'i: he was Ibrahim b. Yazid b. 'Amr b. al-Aswad, Abu 'Imran. He was born in ۵۰ H and died in ۹۵ or ۹۶ H.(۲)

It is unanimously agreed upon within the Ummah that Amir al-Muminin 'Ali b. Abi Talib was martyred in ۴۰ H, some ۱۰ years before this Ibrahim was born! That means he was narrating as an eye-witness what occurred long before his birth! Yet, Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah – who apparently admits that the report of Ibrahim is mursal (disconnected) – wants us to believe it was a "good" testimony. What happened to his common sense?

It gets worse with the riwayah of Shibak – which our Shaykh has graded as "correctly preserved". He too was not an eye-witness, and had only gotten his story – as he personally indicated – from Ibrahim! In fact, even though Imam 'Ali belonged to the first tabaqah (i.e. generation of narrators), Shibak only fell in the sixth – a fact which throws him far, far away from the time of the alleged incident! Yet, al-Hafiz (d. ۸۵۲ H)

has some further

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۱- Taqiy al-Din Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. 'Abd al-Salam b. 'Abd Allah b. Abi al-Qasim b. Muhammad b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani al-Hanbali al-Dimashqi, al-Sarim al-Maslul 'ala Shatim al-Rasul (Saudi Arabia: al-Haras al-Watani al-Sa'udi) [annotator: Muhammad Muhy al-Din 'Abd al-Hamid], p. ۵۸۴

۲- Abu Hatim Muhammad b. Hibban b. Ahmad al-Tamimi al-Busti, Mashahir 'Ulama al-Amsar (Dar al-Wafa li al-Taba'at wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; ۱st edition, ۱۴۱۱ H) [annotator: Marzuq 'Ali Ibrahim], p. ۱۶۳, ۷۴۸

:damaging information about him

شباك ... الضبى الكوفى الأعمى ثقه له ذكر فى صحيح مسلم وكان يدلس من السادسه.

Shibak ... al-Dhabi al-Kufi, the Blind: Thiqah (trustworthy). He is mentioned in Sahih Muslim. He used to do tadlis. He was from the sixth (tabaqat).(۱)

The bottom-line of all this is obvious. Both Shibak and Ibrahim were completely cut off from the time of Amir al-Muminin. So, neither of them could have validly narrated about events which occurred during his khilafah. Secondly, in the chain of Ibrahim is Shibak, a mudalis, who has narrated from the former in an 'an-'an manner. This is another, independent evidence of the unreliability of the chain of Ibrahim! So, both reports quoted by Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah are not just dha'if – they are very weak (dha'if jiddan) But, what have we got our Shaykh stating about them instead?! This is how some people behave when they become desperate about their fallacies.

Even then, these reports only show that one Ibn al-Sawda hated and reviled Abu Bakr and 'Umar during the khilafah of Imam 'Ali. It nowhere identifies him as Ibn Saba. Also, it does not confirm the Sunni claims that 'Abd Allah b. Saba believed in al-raj'ah, or in the wisayah or 'isma of 'Ali, nor does it establish his guilty in the murder of 'Uthman.

۴. Tracing The Fairytale: Explicit Athar Mentioning "The Black Container"

There are Sunni reports which allege that Imam ‘Ali, ‘alaihi al-salam, called someone – or perhaps each of a set of people - “the black container”. We have quoted one of such

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Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah - ۱ al-‘Ilmiyyah; ۲nd edition, ۱۴۱۵ H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. ۱, pp. ۴۱۰-۴۱۱, ۲۷۴۲

riwayat in the last chapter. We will here proceed to examine all the other existing .”Sunni riwayat on “the black container

:Ibn Asakir (d. ۵۷۱ H) records

أخبرنا أبو القاسم يحيى بن بطريق بن بشرى وأبو محمد عبد الكريم بن حمزه قالا أنا أبو الحسن بن مكى أنا أبو القاسم المؤمل بن أحمد بن محمد الشيبانى نا يحيى بن محمد بن صاعد نا بندار نا محمد بن جعفر نا شعبه عن سلمه عن زيد بن وهب عن على قال ما لى ومال هذا الحميت الأسود قال ونا يحيى بن محمد نا بندار نا محمد بن جعفر نا شعبه عن سلمه قال قال سمعت أبا الزعراء يحدث عن على عليه السلام قال ما لى ومال هذا الحميت الأسود

Abu al-Qasim Yahya b. Batriq b. Bushra and Abu Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Karim b. Hamzah – Abu al-Hasan b. Makki – Abu al-Qasim al-Muammal b. Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Shaybani – Yahya b. Muhammad b. Sa’id – Bundar – Muhammad b. :Ja’far – Shu’bah – Salamah – Zayd b. Wahb

”?Ali said, “What do I have to do with this black container‘

And Yahya b. Muhammad – Bundar – Muhammad b. Ja’far – Shu’bah – Salamah – Abu :al-Za’ra

(Ali, ‘alaihi al-salam, said: “What do I have to do with this black container?”(۱‘

These ones are even more redundant than the previous one. No information whatsoever is given on the “black container”. Who was he? What did he do? Nothing! Absolutely nothing! If we connected them with the other report, then we would have

"the identity of the "black container

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Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. al-Hasan b. Habat Allah b. 'Abd Allah, Ibn Asakir al-Shafi'i, - ۱ Tarikh Madinah Dimashq (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; ۱۴۱۵ H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. ۲۹, p. ۷

as simply Ibn al-Sawda and his crime as telling lies upon Allah and His Messenger, !?sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi. But, who was that even

The final Sunni riwayah on the "black container" is this one, reported by Imam Ibn Abi :(Khaythamah (d. ۲۷۹ H

حدثنا عمرو بن مرزوق قال أنا شعبه عن سلمه بن كهيل عن زيد بن وهب قال قال على] ما لى [ولهذا الحميت الأسود يعنى عبد الله بن سبأ وكان يقع فى أبى بكر وعمر

كذا قال : عن سلمه عن زيد بن وهب

:Amr b. Marzuq – Shu'bah – Salamah b. Kuhayl – Zayd b. Wahb'

Ali said, "[What do I have to do] with this black container?". He meant 'Abd Allah b.' .Saba and he used to attack Abu Bakr and 'Umar

(That was how he said: from Salamah from Zayd b. Wahb.(۱

:Imam Ibn Asakir also reports

أخبرنا أبو محمد بن طاوس وأبو يعلى حمزه بن الحسن بن المفرج قالا أنا أبو القاسم بن أبى العلاء أنا أبو محمد بن أبى نصر أنا خيثمه بن سليمان نا أحمد بن زهير بن حرب نا عمرو بن مرزوق أنا شعبه عن سلمه بن كهيل عن زيد قال قال على بن أبى طالب ما لى ولهذا الحميت الأسود يعنى عبد الله بن سبأ وكان يقع فى أبى بكر وعمر

Abu Muhammad b. Tawus and Abu Ya'la Hamzah b. al-Hasan b. al-Mufarraj – Abu al-Qasim b. Abi al-'Ala – Abu Muhammad b. Abi Nasr – Khaythamah b. Sulayman – :Ahmad b. Zuhayr b. Harb – 'Amr b. Marzuq – Shu'bah – Salamah b. Kuhayl – Zayd

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Abu Bakr Ahmad b. Abi Khaythamah Zuhayr b. Harb, Tarikh Ibn Abi Khaythamah -۱ (al-Faruq al-Hadithiyyah li al-Taba'ah wa al-Nashr; ۱st edition, ۱۴۲۴ H), vol. ۳, p. ۱۷۷, ۴۳۵۸

Ali b. Abi Talib said, "What do I have to do with this black container?". He meant 'Abd ' (Allah b. Saba and he used to attack Abu Bakr and 'Umar.(۱)

This report has some serious problems. First and foremost, it is mudraj (interpolated). The sentence "He meant 'Abd Allah b. Saba and he used to attack Abu Bakr and 'Umar" was inserted by a narrator, and we have no explicit proof of who it was. It could have been any of the narrators from Amr b. Marzuq to Zayd b. Wahb. With no solid evidence to pinpoint a particular narrator as the source of the interpolation, it is .impossible to rely upon it as an eye-witness testimony. So, that identification is dha'if

Meanwhile, we have already seen the version of the athar transmitted by Muhammad b. Ja'far from Shu'bah from Salamah from Zayd. It does NOT contain the last phrase above, identifying the "black container" explicitly as 'Abd Allah b. Saba, and explaining his lies upon Allah and His Messenger as his attacks on Abu Bakr and 'Umar! Therefore, neither Shu'bah, nor Salamah, nor Zayd, was the source of that addition. Rather, the only possible origin of that interpolation was 'Amr b. Marzuq. This then rightly leads to the conclusion that the idraj is NOT an eye-witness account. By contrast, it was made by someone who was disconnected from the reported incident .by about one century! That confirms its invalidity

Moreover, 'Amr b. Marzuq in the chain is dha'if. Al-Hafiz (d. ۸۵۲

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Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. al-Hasan b. Habat Allah b. 'Abd Allah, Ibn Asakir al-Shafi'i, - ۱ Tarikh Madinah Dimashq (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; ۱۴۱۵ H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. ۲۹, pp. ۷-۸

:H) says about him

عمرو بن مرزوق الباهلى أبو عثمان البصرى أثنى عليه سليمان بن حرب وأحمد بن حنبل وقال يحيى بن معين ثقه مأمون ووثقه ابن سعد وأما على بن المدينى فكان يقول اتركوا حديثه وقال القواريرى كان يحيى بن سعيد لا يرضى عمرو بن مرزوق وقال الساجى كان أبو الوليد يتكلم فيه وقال ابن عمار والعجلى ليس بشئ وقال الدارقطنى كثير الوهم

قلت :لم يخرج عنه البخارى فى الصحيح سوى حديثين أحدهما حديثه عن شعبه عن عمرو بن مره عن عروه عن أبى موسى فى فضل عائشه وهو عنده بمتابعه آدم بن أبى إياس وغندر وغيرهما عن شعبه والثانى حديثه عن شعبه عن ابن أبى بكر عن أنس فى ذلك الكبائر مقرونا عنده بعبد الصمد عن شعبه فوضح أنه لم يخرج له احتجاجا والله أعلم

Amr b. Marzuq al-Bahili, Abu 'Uthman al-Basri: Sulayman b. Harb and Ahmad b.' Hanbal extolled him; and Yahya b. Ma'in said, "Thiqah (trustworthy), reliable" and Ibn Sa'd declared him thiqah (trustworthy). As for 'Ali b. al-Madini, he used to say, "Reject his ahadith"! Al-Qawariri also said, "Yahya b. Sa'id was not pleased with 'Amr b. Marzuq". Al-Saji said, "Abu al-Walid used to criticize him". Both Ibn 'Ammar and al-'Ijli ."said, "He is nothing". And al-Daraqutni said, "He hallucinated A LOT

I say: al-Bukhari has not narrated from him in his Sahih except two hadiths only. One of them is his hadith from Shu'bah, from 'Amr b. Marrah, from 'Urwah, from Abu Musa concerning the merit of 'Aishah, and with him, it is with him through the mutaba'at

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of Adam b. Abi Iyas, Ghandar and others from Shu'bah. In his second hadith from Shu'bah from Ibn Abi Bakr from Anas concerning that al-Kabair, he is conjoined (in the chain) with 'Abd al-Samad from Shu'bah, with him (i.e. al-Bukhari). So, it becomes (clear that he did NOT narrate from him as a hujjah (proof), and Allah knows best.(۱)

If a narrator is thiqah (trustworthy), but hallucinates a lot, then his uncorroborated reports are dha'if. No wonder, al-Bukhari (d. ۲۵۶ H) did not accept 'Amr b. Marzuq as a hujjah, and only conjoined him with others from Shu'bah in the chains. Therefore, the above chain of 'Amr b. Marzuq – in which he has stood alone without support – is .dha'if

However, some of our Sunni brothers attempt to defend 'Amr by quoting these :further submissions of al-Hafiz

قال أبو زرعه سمعت أحمد بن حنبل وقلت له ان على بن المدينى يتكلم فى عمرو ابن مرزوق فقال عمرو رجل صالح لا أدرى ما يقول على ... قال أبو زرعه وسمعت سليمان ابن حرب وذكر عمرو بن مرزوق فقال جاء بما ليس عندهم فحسدوه وقال الفضل بن زياد سأل عنه أبو عبيد الله الحدانى عن أحمد بن حنبل فقال ثقه مأمون فتشنا على ما قيل فيه فلم نجد له أصلا

Abu Zur'ah said: I heard Ahmad b. Hanbal and I said to him that 'Ali b. al-Madini criticized 'Amr b. Marzuq. He said, " 'Amr is a righteous man. I do not know what 'Ali says" ... Abu Zur'ah said: I also heard Sulayman

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Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Hajar al-'Asqalani al-Shafi'i, Hadi al- -۱ Sari Muqaddimah Fath al-Bari (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; ۱st edition, ۱۴۰۸ H), pp. ۴۳۱-۴۳۲

b. Harb and he mentioned 'Amr b. Marzuq and said, "He came with what they did not have. So, they envied him." Al-Fadhl b. Ziyad said: Abu 'Ubayd Allah al-Hadani asked about him from Ahmad b. Hanbal and he said, "Trustworthy, reliable. We investigated (what whas said about him, and we did not find any basis for it."(۱)

Then, our opponents claim through these that all the criticisms against 'Amr were due to envy! However, this line of argument does not offer much help to our Sunni brothers. Sulayman b. Harb (d. ۲۲۴ H) and Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. ۲۴۱ H) were obviously referring to the contemporaries of 'Amr in their objections. It is possible that some of those people were indeed influenced by envy in their castigation of him. It is equally possible that Sulayman and Ahmad were heavily biased in favour of him, or were both unable to conduct sufficient probes to determine the truth about him. In any case, what we primarily rely upon against him is from Imam al-Daraqutni (d. ۳۸۵ H) and Imam al-Hakim (d. ۴۰۳ H), later scholars who apparently had investigated his reports and had then drawn their conclusions. Obviously, the charge of envy does not affect :the duo. Al-Hafiz submits about 'Amr

وقال ابن عمار الموصلى ليس بشئ وقال العجلى عمرو ابن مرزوق بصرى ضعيف يحدث عن شعبه ليس بشئ وقال الحاكم عن الدارقطنى صدوق كثير الوهم وقال الحاكم سيئ الحفظ

Ibn ‘Ammar al-Mawsili said: “He is nothing.” Al-‘Ijli said, “ ‘Amr b. Marzuq Basri

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۱- Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib (Dar al-Fikr; ۱st edition, ۱۴۰۴ H), vol. ۸, p. ۸۸, ۱۶۰

is dha’if. He narrated from Shu’bah. He was nothing. Al-Hakim narrated that al-Daraqutni said: “Very truthful. He hallucinated A LOT.” And al-Hakim said, “He had a defective memory.”(۱)

Certainly, the reports of a narrator like this are dha’if, without doubt! Most importantly, the criticisms against him are “explained”. Therefore, they take precedence over any praise of him.

۵. Hitting The Final Nail: The Wisayah And The Raj’ah

The aim of those who ceaselessly peddle the Ibn Saba fables is primarily to prove:

۱. that he was the origin of the claim that Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali, ‘alaihi al-salam, was declared khalifah by his Prophet, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi; and

۲. that he founded the claim that khilafah belongs exclusively to ‘Ali and the offspring of Muhammad; and

۳. that he was the first to express belief in al-raj’ah.

However, even in the authentic Sunni ahadith, evidence can be produced to establish that belief in the khilafah of the Ahl al-Bayt, ‘alaihim al-salam, as well as in al-raj’ah, was part of the original teachings of Islam. For instance, Imam Ibn Abi ‘Asim (d. ۲۸۷ H) records:

ثنا محمد بن المثنى، حدثنا يحى بن حماد، عن أبى عوانه، عن يحيى بن سليم أبى بلج عن عمرو بن ميمون، عن ابن عباس قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لعلى: أنت منى بمنزله هارون من موسى إلا أنك لست نبيا وأنت خليفتى فى كل مؤمن من بعدى.

Muhammad b. al-Muthanna – Yahya b. Hammad – Abu ‘Awanah – Yahya b. Sulaym Abu Balj – ‘Amr b. Maymun – Ibn ‘Abbas: The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said

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Ibid, vol. ۸, p. ۸۹, ۱۶۰ -۱

to ‘Ali: “You are to me of the status of Harun to Musa, with the exception that you are not a prophet. And you are my khalifah over every believer after me.”(۱)

:Dr. al-Jawabirah says

اسناده حسن. رجاله رجال الشيخين غير ابى بلج واسمه يحيى بن سليم بن بلج، قال الحافظ: صدوق ربما اخطأ. وله شواهد

Its chain is hasan. Its narrators are narrators of the two Shaykhs, except Abu Balj, and his name is Yahya b. Sulaym b. Balj. Al-Hafiz said: “Saduq (very truthful), maybe he made mistakes.” There are witnesses for it (i.e. the hadith).”(۲)

:Allamah al-Albani (d. ۱۴۲۰ H) also comments on the sanad‘

إسناده حسن .ورجاله ثقات رجال الشيخين غير أبى بلج واسمه يحيى بن سليم بن بلج قال الحافظ" :صدوق ربما أخطأ ".

Its chain is hasan. Its narrators are trustworthy, and are narrators of the two Shaykhs (i.e. al-Bukhari and Muslim) except Abu Balj. His name is Yahya b. Sulaym b. Balj. Al-Hafiz said: “Saduq (very truthful), maybe he made mistakes.”(۳)

:Assessing the same chain, Imam al-Hakim (d. ۴۰۳ H) declares

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This hadith has a sahih chain.(۴)

:And Imam al-Dhahabi (d. ۷۴۸ H) seconds him

صحيح

(Sahih.(۵

:Allamah Ahmad Shakir (d. ۱۳۷۷ H) too has the same verdict on same isnad‘

إسناده صحيح

(Its chain is sahih.(۶

:And Imam al-Busiri (d. ۸۴۰ H) holds the same view, concerning the chain

سند صحيح

(A sahih chain.(۷

This hadith is explicit, straightforward, and authentic(۸). It leaves no room for doubt or manipulation. It absolutely establishes that Imam ‘Ali was indeed the designated khalifah of Muhammad, the Messenger of the Lord of

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۱- Abu Bakr b. Abi ‘Asim, Ahmad b. ‘Amr b. al-Dhahhak b. Mukhlid al-Shaybani, Kitab al-Sunnah (Dar al-Sami’i li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’) [annotator: Dr. Basim b. Faysal al-Jawabirah], vol. ۱, pp. ۷۹۹-۸۰۰, ۱۲۲۲

۲- Ibid

۳- Abu Bakr b. Abi ‘Asim, Ahmad b. ‘Amr b. al-Dhahhak b. Mukhlid al-Shaybani, Kitab al-Sunnah (al-Maktab al-Islami; ۱st edition, ۱۴۰۰ H) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. ۲, p. ۵۶۵, ۱۱۸۸

۴- Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-’Ilmiyyah; ۱st edition, ۱۴۱۱ H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. ۳, p. ۱۴۳, ۴۶۵۲

۵- Ibid

۶- Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Dar al-Hadith; ۱st edition, ۱۴۱۶ H) [annotator: Ahmad Muhammad Shakir], vol. ۱, p. ۳۳۱, ۳۰۶۲

۷- Ahmad b. Abi Bakr b. Isma’il al-Busiri, Itihaf al-Khiyarah al-Maharah bi Zawaid al-Masanid al-‘Ashara (Riyadh: Dar al-Watan; ۱st edition, ۱۴۲۰ H), vol. ۷, p. ۱۸۴, ۶۶۳۰

This author has published an entire book entitled On the Khilafah of 'Ali over Abu -٨ Bakr: A Dictionary of Sahih Sunni Ahadith in which he has explored the above hadith .and several similar others in great detail

.the worlds

:Allamah al-Albani has a second hadith for our research'

إني تـارك فيكم خليفتين: كتـاب الله حبـل ممـدود مـا بين السـماء والأـرض وعترتى أهـل بيتى وإنهمـا لن يتفرقا حتى يردا على الحوض

I am leaving behind over you two khalifahs: the Book of Allah - a rope stretching between the heaven and the earth – and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt. Verily, both (shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Font.(١

:Then, the 'Allamah comments

صحيح

(Sahih(٢

:On the same page, al-Albani copies another similar hadith

إني تـارك فيكم مـا إن تمسـكتم به لن تضـلوا بعـدى أحـدهما أعظم من الآـخر كتاب الله حبل ممـدود من السـماء إلى الأرض وعترتى أهل بيتى ولن يتفرقا حتى يردا على الحوض فانظروا كيف تخلفونى فيهما

I am leaving behind over you that which if you adhere to it you will never go astray after me, one of them both is greater than the other: the Book of Allah – a rope stretching from the heaven to the earth – and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt. Both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Font. Therefore, (watch carefully how you treat them in my absence.(٣

:Again, 'Allamah al-Albani says

صحيح

(Sahih(۴

This hadith too grants and limits the khilafah to ‘Ali and his offspring through Sayyidah .(Fatimah(۵

We therefore ask our brothers from the Ahl al-Sunnah, especially the Salafiyyah: are !?you going to play your "Ibn Saba" card against the Messenger of Allah too

With regards to the second issue, there is need for some little explanations in

p: ۷۱

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۱ - Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Sahih al-Jami' al-Saghir wa Ziyadatuhu (Al-Maktab al-Islami), vol. ۱, p. ۴۸۲, ۲۴۵۷

۲- Ibid

۳- Ibid, vol. ۱, p. ۴۸۲, ۲۴۵۸

۴- Ibid

۵ - This author has a book on the two hadiths, entitled Hadith al-Thaqalayn: The Deposed Will of the Last Prophet to Humanity. In it, he has done an extensive .research on the authenticity, meaning and history of the hadiths

order to make the matter clearer. The word al-raj'ah literally means "the return". Any "return" to anything is a raj'ah. For instance, an ex-Muslim who "returns" to Islam has done a raj'ah back to the true faith. In the same manner, a traveller who "returns" home has done a raj'ah. Technically, however, al-raj'ah is the "return" of any dead person into this world through resurrection. It is therefore completely different from other concepts such as rebirth or reincarnation. It is the same body, with the same soul, that returns to this world from Barzakh by Allah's Command. At a more specific level, al-raj'ah – in Shi'i theology – is the "return" after death of certain people to this earth – through resurrection - during the "End Times" period. Another word for this, in .(Shi'i terminology, is al-karrah(۱

:There is, without doubt, a general rule set in the Book of Allah

حتی إذا جاء أحدهم الموت قال رب ارجعون لعلی أعمل صالحا فیما ترکت کلا إنها کلمه هو قائلها ومن ورائهم برزخ إلی یوم

يبعثون

Until when death comes to one of them, he says, "My Lord! Send me back, so that I may do good in that which I have left behind!" No! It is but a word that he speaks, and behind them is Barzakh until the Day when they will be resurrected.(٢)

So, anyone who dies is prevented from ever returning to this world. He is rather locked behind the Barzakh till al-Qiyamah. Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. ٧٧٤ H) states under

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١- The word al-karrah has been used in the Book of Allah to mean the return of a dead person to life on the earth through resurrection after death. See Qur'an ٢:١۶٧, ٢۶:١٠٢ and ٣٩:٥٨

٢- Qur'an ٢٣:٩٩-١٠٠

the above verse:

وقال مجاهـد : البرزخ : الحاجز ما بين الـدنيا والآخره. وقال محمـد بن كعب : البرزخ : ما بين الدنيا والآخره. ليسوا مع أهل الدنيا يأكلون ويشربون ، ولا مع أهل الآخره يجازون بأعمالهم. وقال أبو صخر : البرزخ : المقابر ، لا هم فى الدنيا ، ولا هم فى الآخره ، فهم مقيمون إلى يوم يبعثون.

Mujahid said: "The Barzakh is a barrier between this world and the Hereafter." Muhammad b. Ka'b said, "The Barzakh is what is between this world and the Hereafter. They are not from the people of this world who eat and drink, and are not with the people of the Hereafter who are rewarded according to their deeds." Abu Dhakhr said, "The Barzakh refers to the graves. They are not in this world and they ARE NOT in the Hereafter. They will remain there till the Day of Resurrection."(١)

However, Allah has provided some exceptions to this general rule – and those are the instances of al-raj'ah. Examples of them are given in His Book. For instance, Allah states:

وإذ قلتم يا موسى لن نؤمن لک حتى نرى الله جهره فأخذتكم الصاعقه وأنتم تنظرون ثم بعثناكم من بعد موتكم لعلكم تشكرون

And when you said, “O Musa! We shall never believe in you until we see Allah plainly.” But you were seized with a thunderbolt while you were looking. Then, We resurrected (you after your death, so that you may be grateful.(٢

:And

ألم تر إلى الذين خرجوا من ديارهم وهم ألوف حذر الموت فقال لهم الله

p: ٧٣

Abu al-Fida Isma’il b. ‘Umar b. Kathir al-Qurshi al-Dimashqi, Tafsir al-Qur’an - ١ al-‘Azim (Dar al-Taybah li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’; ٢nd edition, ١۴٢٠ H) [annotator: Sami b. Muhammad Salamah], vol. ۵, p. ۴٩۴-۴٩۵

Qur’an ٢:۵۵-۵۶ -٢

موتوا ثم أحياهم

Did you not see those who went forth from their homes in thousands, fearing death? (Allah said to them, “Die”. Then, He resurrected them.(١

:And

أو كالذى مر على قريه وهى خاويه على عروشها قال أنى يحيى هذه الله بعد موتها فأماته الله مائه عام ثم بعثه

Or like he who passed by a town and it had tumbled over its roofs. He said: “Oh! How will Allah ever bring it to life after its death?” So, Allah caused him to die for a hundred (years, and then resurrected him.(٢

:The Qur’an also quotes Allah as having said to ‘Isa, one of the Israilite prophets

وإذ تخرج الموتى بإذنى

(And when you resurrect the dead with My Permission(٣

:Prophet ‘Isa himself said this to his people, as reported by the Book of Allah

وأحيى الموتى بإذن الله

(And I resurrect the dead by Allah's Permission.(۴

These are all instances of people "returning" from Barzakh into this world through resurrection. They are all instances of al-raj'ah.

We see from these verses that al-karrah occurred in the previous Ummahs before ours, especially among the Israilites. There is significance in this fact for our research. This is on account of this hadith, documented by Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. ۲۷۹ H):

حدثنا محمود بن غيلان حدثنا أبو داود الحفرى عن سفيان الثورى عن عبد الرحمن بن زياد الأفريقى عن عبد الله بن يزيد عن عبد الله بن عمرو قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم ليأتين على أمتى ما أتى على بنى إسرائيل حذو النعل بالنعل حتى إن كان منهم من أتى أمه

۱- Qur'an ۲:۲۴۳
۲- Qur'an ۲:۲۵۹
۳- Qur'an ۵:۱۱۰
۴- Qur'an ۳:۴۹

علانيه لكان فى أمتى من يصنع ذلك وإن بنى إسرائيل تفرقت على ثنتين وسبعين مله وتفترق أمتى على ثلاث وسبعين مله كلهم فى النار إلا مله واحده قالوا ومن هى يا رسول الله قال ما أنا عليه وأصحابى

Mahmud b. Ghilan – Abu Dawud al-Hafari – Sufyan al-Thawri – 'Abd al-Rahman b. Ziyad al-Afriqi – 'Abd Allah b. Yazid – 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "Verily, everything that occurred to the offspring of Israil will occur to my Ummah in identical manners, such that if any of them had sexual intercourse with his mother publicly, there will certainly be in my Ummah someone who will do that. Verily, the offspring of Israil divided into seventy-two religions; and my Ummah will divide into seventy-three religions, all of them will be in the Fire except one religion." They said, "Who are those, O Messenger?" He replied, "That which I and my Sahabah follow."(۱)

'Allamah al-Albani comments:

حسن

(Hasan(۲

Of course, al-raj'ah occurred to the offspring of Israil too. Therefore, it certainly is .part of our Ummah as well

:The Qur'an too proclaims

سنه الله فی الذین خلوا من قبل ولن تجد لسنه الله تبدیلا

That was the Sunnah of Allah in the case of those passed away of old, and you will not (find any change in the Sunnah of Allah.(۳

:And

سنه الله التی قد خلت من قبل ولن تجد لسنه الله تبدیلا

That has been the Sunnah of Allah already with those who passed away before. And you will not find

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۱ - - Abu 'Isa Muhammad b. 'Isa al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami' al-Sahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. ۵, p. ۲۶, ۲۶۴۱. This authentic hadith establishes some fundamental principles. First, it shows that the similar occurrences between our Ummah and that of the Israilites may not be ۱۰۰٪ identical. What matters most is the basic fact common to both examples as well as the substantial similarity between them. For instance, the offspring of Israil divided into ۷۲ religions. However, our own Ummah will divide into ۷۳ religions. ۷۳, of course, is not the same as ۷۲, even though they are close together. Yet, the basic fact remains: the Israilites divided, and we too are divided. Another crucial principle from this hadith is that anything that a Sahabi said or did – which was never said or done by the Prophet – is misguidance, from one of the ۷۲ heretical religions. The Messenger was careful to emphasise that the truth is not what his Sahabah alone

.were upon, but what he and his Sahabah followed together

Ibid -٢

Qur'an ٣٣:٦٢ -٣

(any change in the Sunnah of Allah.(١)

Al-Raj'ah was without doubt part of the Sunnah of our Lord with the previous Ummahs. Obviously, it is compulsorily part of His Sunnah with our Ummah too. There .is never any change in the Sunnah of Allah with the various Ummahs

Aqidah Al-Raj'ah: Between 'Umar And 'Ali' .۶

Umar b. al-Khattab, the second Sunni khalifah, was one of the earliest to publicly' declare belief in al-raj'ah, long before even the unproved profession of the same :'aqidah by Ibn Saba. Imam al-Bukhari (d. ٢٥۶ H) records

حدثنا إسماعيل بن عبد الله حدثنا سليمان بن بلال عن هشام ابن عروه عن عروه بن الزبير عن عائشه رضى الله عنها زوج النبى صلى الله عليه و سلم :أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم مات وأبو بكر بالسنح - قال إسماعيل يعنى بالعاليه - فقام عمر يقول والله ما مات رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قالت وقال عمر والله ما كان يقع فى نفسى إلا ذاك وليبعثنه الله فليقطعن أيدى رجال وأرجلهم .

Isma'il b. 'Abd Allah – Sulayman b. Bilal – Hisham b. 'Urwah – 'Urwah b. al-Zubayr – :'Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, the wife of the Prophet, peace be upon him

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, died while Abu Bakr was at a place called al-Sunah (i.e. al-'Aliyah). 'Umar stood up, saying, "I swear by Allah! The Messenger of Allah is not dead!" She ('Aishah) narrated: 'Umar said, "I swear by Allah! Nothing occurred to my mind except that. Verily! Allah will RESURRECT(٢) him and

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Qur'an ۴٨:٢٣ -١

A Sunni brother raises an objection to our translation of yab'ath as "resurrect". He -٢ says that it only means "send" in this context, and not "resurrect". Meanwhile, Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, the Sunni translator of Sahih al-Bukhari, has also rendered

the word as “resurrect” (see Sahih al-Bukhari, English Translation, Volume ٥, Book ٥٧, Number ١٩). The alternative translation – “send” – which is offered by our Sunni brother makes no sense. For instance, ‘Umar’s words would look like this: “Verily! Allah will SEND him and he will cut the hands and legs of some men.” But, Allah has already sent His Prophet decades before that period! Or, did ‘Umar not believe, up till that moment, that Muhammad was a messenger sent by Allah? What may be said here is that ‘Umar was double-speaking, perhaps due to the “shock” which he allegedly suffered as a result of the “sudden” death of the Prophet, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi, or for some other reasons that were well-known to his Lord. He was denying and also affirming the Messenger’s death at the same time! If he did not die, how would he resurrect? Was all this only a tactical drama by ‘Umar to stall time, in order to allow a certain plan to materialize? We believe so. Interestingly, while ‘Umar later suddenly “believed” the death of the Prophet of Allah once Abu Bakr arrived and spoke, we have been unable to locate any authentic Sunni evidence showing that he ever .recanted his other claim about the future raj’ah of Muhammad

(he will cut the hands and legs of some men."(١)

It is this very belief that has been attributed to ‘Abd Allah b. Saba in the mawdhu’ :((fabricated) report documented by Imam Ibn Jarir al-Tabari (d. ٣١٠ H

فقال لهم فيما يقول لعجب ممن يزعم أن عيسى يرجع ويكذب بأن محمدا يرجع وقد قال الله عز و جل إن الذى فرض عليك القرآن لرادك إلى معاد فمحمد أحق بالرجوع من عيسى قال فقبل ذلك عنه ووضع لهم الرجعه فتكلموا فيها

Then, he said to them, “It is strange of he who claims that ‘Isa will return but rejects that Muhammad will return. Meanwhile, Allah the Almighty has said, ‘Verily, He Who has ordained the Qur’an upon you (O Muhammad) will surely bring you back to a place of return’ (٢٨:٨٥). As such, Muhammad is more entitled to return than ‘Isa.” So, it was accepted from him, and he created for them (the doctrine of) al-raj’ah, and they (spoke about it.(٢

It is indeed strange that the Ahl al-Sunnah ignore ‘Umar and attack Ibn Saba instead for this ‘aqidah, despite the complete lack of evidence to establish that the latter ever .believed it?! Indeed, wonders never end

Meanwhile, there is also good Sunni evidence to support a theory that Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, ‘alaihi al-salam, equally believed in his own raj’ah before the :Qiyamah. Imam al-Tabari again records

حدثنا محمد بن المثنى، قال: ثنا محمد بن جعفر، قال: ثنا شعبه، عن القاسم بن أبى بزه، عن أبى الطفيل، قال: سمعت عليا وسألوه عن

Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma’il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju’fi, al- -۱ Jami’ al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; ۳rd edition, ۱۴۰۷ H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. ۳, p. ۱۳۴۱, ۳۴۶۷

Abu Ja’far Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari, Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk (Beirut: Dar -۲ al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; ۱st edition, ۱۴۰۷ H), vol. ۲, p. ۶۴۷

ذى القرنين أنبيا كان؟ قال: كان عبدا صالحا، أحب الله فأحبه، وناصح الله فنصحه، فبعثه الله إلى قومه، فضربوه ضربتين فى رأسه، فسمى ذا القرنين، وفيكم اليوم مثله.

Muhammad b. al-Muthanna – Muhammad b. Ja’far – Shu’bah – al-Qasim b. Abi :Bazzah – Abu al-Tufayl

I heard ‘Ali while they asked him about Dhu al-Qarnayn: “Was he a prophet?” He replied, “He was a righteous servant. He loved Allah and Allah loved him. He sought the guidance of Allah and He guided him. Then, Allah sent him to his people. But, they struck him twice on his head. As a result, he was named Dhu al-Qarnayn. And among (you today is an example of him.(۱

:Commenting upon this exact riwayah, Prof. Ibn Yasin pronounces

وسنده صحيح

(Its chain is sahih.(۲

.So , the matter is clear and undisputable

:This sahih athar proves the following

١. Dhu al-Qarnayn, 'alaihi al-salam, was not a prophet. But, he was a righteous servant loved by Allah, and he was rightly guided by Him.

٢. He was given that name only because he was fatally struck twice on his head.

٣. Even though he was not a prophet, Allah nonetheless "sent" him to his people, like a prophet. This shows that non-prophets can be given some qualities and jobs of prophets.

Imam al-Tabari further presents:

حدثنا محمد بن بشار، قال: ثنا يحيى، عن سفيان، عن حبيب بن أبى ثابت، عن أبى الطفيل، قال: سئل على رضوان الله عليه عن ذى القرنين، فقال: كان عبدا ناصح الله فناصحه، فدعا قومه إلى الله، فضربوه على قرنه فمات، فأحياه الله،

p: ٧٨

١- Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarir b. Yazid b. Kathir b. Ghalib al-Amuli al-Tabari, Jami al-Bayan fi Tawil al-Qur'an (Dar al-Fikr; ١٤١٥ H) [annotator: Sidqi Jamil al-'Attar], vol. ١۶, pp. ١٢-١٣. A Sunni opponent makes some very ridiculous claims about this riwayah. He is unable to reject its authenticity. So, he alleges that it is "very possible" that Amir al-Muminin learnt this hadith from the Israelites! Alas, Imam 'Ali was, without any doubt, NOT among those Sahabah who used to go to the Israelites to learn their religion! Mawquf reports bordering on al-ghayb – like this one – from Sahabah like 'Ali are graded marfu' (i.e. from the Prophet). Even a beginner in Sunni 'ilm al-hadith knows this! Our Sunni friend also claims that the Prophet was once asked about Dhu al-Qarnayn, and he did not know whether Dhu al-Qarnayn was a prophet or not. But, the explanation of thing is very simple. The Messenger of Allah made that statement before Allah informed him of the status of Dhu al-Qarnayn. However, when He eventually told him, he too narrated it to his Sahabah. That is the logical explanation in view of the ahadith of Amir al-Muminin.

٢- Prof. Dr. Hikmat b. Bashir b. Yasin, Mawsu'at al-Sahih al-Masbur min al-Tafsir bi al-Mathur (Madinah: Dar al-Mathar li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi' wa al-Taba'at; ١st edition, ١٤٢٠ H), vol. ٣, p. ٣٢٢

فدعا قومه إلى الله، فضربوه على قرنه فمات، فسمى ذا القرنين

:Muhammad b. Bashar – Yahya – Sufyan – Habib b. Abi Thabit – Abu al-Tufayl

Ali, ridhwanullah ‘alaihi, was asked about Dhu al-Qarnayn, and he replied, “He was a‘ servant who sought the guidance of Allah, and He guided him. He called his people to Allah. So, they struck him on his qarn, AND HE DIED. But, Allah RESURRECTED him, and he (again) called his people to Allah. They (once again) struck him on his qarn, (AND HE DIED. Therefore, he was named Dhu al-Qarnayn.(١

:This report too is sahih. Al-Hafiz (d. ٨٥٢ H) states about the first narrator

محمد بن بشار بن عثمان العبدى البصرى أبو بكر بندار ثقه

Muhammad b. Bashar b. ‘Uthman al-‘Abdi al-Basri, Abu Bakr Bundar: Thiqah ((trustworthy).(٢

:Concerning the second narrator, he also says

يحيى بن سعيد بن فروخ بفتح الفاء وتشديد الراء المضمومه وسكون الواو ثم معجمه التميمى أبو سعيد القطان البصرى ثقه متقن حافظ إمام قدوه

Yahya b. Sa’id b. Farrukh al-Tamimi, Abu Sa’id al-Qattan al- Basri: Thiqah ((trustworthy), extremely precise, a hadith scientist, an Imam, a leader.(٣

:On the third narrator, al-Hafiz submits

سفيان بن سعيد بن مسروق الثورى أبو عبد الله الكوفى ثقه حافظ فقيه عابد إمام حجه

Sufyan b. Sa’id b. Masruq al-Thawri, Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Kufi: Thiqah (trustworthy), a hadith scientist, a jurist, a devout worshipper of Allah, an Imam, a hujjah ((authority).(۴

:The fourth narrator is thiqah (trustworthy) too, as al-Hafiz declares

حبيب بن أبى ثابت قيس ويقال هند بن دينار الأسدى مولاهم أبو يحيى الكوفى ثقه فقيه جليل

Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarir b. Yazid b. Kathir b. Ghalib al-Amuli al-Tabari, Jami -١ al-Bayan fi Tawil al-Qur'an (Dar al-Fikr; ١٤١٥ H) [annotator: Sidqi Jamil al-'Attar], vol. ١۶, p. ١٢

Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah -٢ al-'Ilmiyyah; ٢nd edition, ١٤١٥ H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. ٢, p. ٥٨, ٥٧٧٢

Ibid, vol. ٢, p. ٣٠٣, ٧٥٨۴ -٣

Ibid, vol. ١, p. ٣٧١, ٢۴٥٢ -۴

وكان كثير الإرسال والتدليس

Habib b. Abi Thabit Qays, and he is called Hind, b. Dinar al-Asadi, their freed slave, Abu Yahya al-Kufi: Thiqah (trustworthy), a jurist, meritorious. He used to do a lot of irsal (and tadlis.(١

The only problem here is that Habib was a mudalis, and he has narrated in an 'an-'an manner from Abu al-Tufayl, radhiyallahu 'anhu. However, this matter is resolved by the mutaba'ah of al-Qasim b. Abi Bazzah, which has already been examined above. .Therefore, the report of Habib is sahih through the mutaba'ah of al-Qasim

Meanwhile, Imam Ibn Abi Shaybah (d. ٢٣٥ H) has also documented a slightly more :detailed riwayah through the same narrators

حدثنا يحيى بن سعيد عن سفيان عن حبيب بن أبى ثابت عن أبى ا لطفيل قال:سئل على عن ذى القرنين فقال: لم يكن نبيا ولا ملكا، ولكنه كان عابدا ناصح الله فنصحه فدعا قومه إلى الله فضرب على قرنه الأيمن فمات فأحياه الله، ثم دعا قومه إلى الله فضرب على قرنه الأيسر فمات فأحياه الله فسمى ذا القرنين.

:Yahya b. Sa'id – Sufyan – Habib b. Abi Thabit – Abu al-Tufayl

Ali was asked about Dhu al-Qarnayn, and he replied, "He was neither a prophet nor' an angel. Rather, he was a servant who sought the guidance of Allah, and He guided him. He called his people to Allah. So, he was struck on his right qarn, AND HE DIED. But, Allah RESURRECTED him, and he (again) called his people to Allah. He was (once .again) struck on his left qarn, AND HE DIED

p: ٨٠

Ibid, vol. ١, p. ١٨٣, ١٠٨٧ -١

(Then, Allah RESURRECTED him (again). Therefore, he was named Dhu al-Qarnayn.(١)

.Of course, the sanad is sahih through its mutaba'ah, as we have already established

:Prof. Ibn Yasin quotes another report for us

قال الضياء المقدسى: أخبرنا أبو المجد زاهر بن أحمد بن حامد بن أحمد الثقفى -بقراءتى عليه بأصبهان- قلت له: أخبركم أبو عبد الله الحسين بن عبد الملك ابن الحسين الخلال -قراءه عليه وأنت تسمع- أنا الإمام أبو الفضل عبد الرحمن ابن أحمد بن الحسن بن بندار الرازى المقرى، أنا أبو الحسن أحمد بن إبراهيم ابن أحمد بن على بن فراس، ثنا أبو جعفر محمد بن إبراهيم الديلى، ثنا أبو عبيد الله سعيد بن عبد الرحمن المخزومى، ثنا سفيان ابن عيينه عن ابن أبى حسين، عن أبى الطفيل قال: سمعت ابن الكواء يسأل على بن أبى طالب - رضى الله عنه - عن ذى القرنين فقال على: لم يكن نبياً ولا ملك، كان عبداً صالحاً، أحبّ الله فأحبه، وناصح الله فناصحه الله، بُعث إلى قومه فضربوه على قرنه فمات فبعثه الله، فسمى ذى القرنين.

:Al-Dhiya al-Maqdisi said

Abu al-Majd Zahir b. Ahmad b. Hamid b. Ahmad al-Thaqafi – Abu 'Abd Allah al-Husayn b. 'Abd al-Malik b. al-Husayn al-Khalal – Imam Abu al-Fadhl 'Abd al-Rahman b. Ahmad b. al-Husayn b. Bundar al-Razi al-Muqri – Abu al-Hasan Ahmad b. Ibrahim b. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Faras – Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Duyali – Abu 'Ubayd Allah Sa'id b. :'Abd al-Rahman al-Makhzumi – Sufyan b. 'Uyaynah – Ibn Abi Husayn – Abu al-Tufayl

I heard Ibn al-Kawa asking 'Ali b. Abi Talib, may Allah be

p: ٨١

Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Abi Shaybah Ibrahim b. 'Uthman b. Abi Bakr b. Abi' -١ Shaybah al-Kufi al-'Ubsi, Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah fi al-Ahadith wa al-Athar (Dar al-Fikr; ١st edition, ١٤٠٩ H) [annotator: Prof. Sa'id al-Laham], vol. ٧, p. ٤٦٨, ٤

pleased with him, about Dhu al-Qarnayn, and 'Ali replied, "He was not a prophet, and he was not an angel. He was rather a righteous servant. He loved Allah; so, He loved

him too. He sought the guidance of Allah; and so, He guided him. He was sent to his people. But, they struck him on his qarn AND HE DIED. Then, Allah RESURRECTED him, and he was thereby named Dhu al-Qarnayn.(١)

Giving the source, our professor states:

(المختاره ٢/١٧٥ ح ٥٥٥) وصححه الحافظ ابن حجر بعد عزوه للمختاره للحافظ الضياء (الفتح ٦/٣٨٣).

Al-Mukhtarat ٢/١٧٥, ٥٥٥) and al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar declared it sahih after attributing it to al-Mukhtarat of al-Hafiz al-Dhiya (al-Fath ٦/٣٨٣)(٢)

These are the exact words of al-Hafiz in his Fath:

أخرجه سفيان بن عيينه فى جامعه عن ابن أبى حسين عن أبى الطفيل نحوه وزاد وناصح الله فناصحه وفيه لم يكن نبيا ولا ملكا وسنده صحيح سمعناه فى الأحاديث المختاره للحافظ الضياء

Sufyan b. 'Uyaynah recorded it in his Jami' from Ibn Abi Husayn from Abu al-Tufayl, and he added: "He sought the guidance of Allah; and so, He guided him" and in it is "He was not a prophet, and he was not an angel". Its chain is sahih. We heard it in al-Ahadith al-Mukhtarat of al-Hafiz al-Dhiya.(٣)

Obviously, al-Hafiz only declares the much shorter chain of Sufyan in his Jami' as sahih. However, he confirms that what we find in al-Ahadith al-Mukhtarat of al-Dhiya is the same as that which was recorded by Sufyan in his book. Meanwhile, al-Hafiz's tashih actually

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١- Prof. Dr. Hikmat b. Bashir b. Yasin, Mawsu'at al-Sahih al-Masbur min al-Tafsir bi al-Mathur (Madinah: Dar al-Mathar li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi' wa al-Taba'at; ١st edition, ١۴٢٠ H), vol. ٣, p. ٣٢٢

٢- Ibid

٣- Shihab al-Din Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Fath al-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah li al-Taba'ah wa al-Nashr; ٢nd edition), vol. ٦, p. ٢٧١

comes before his mention of al-Dhiya's book, contrary to the erroneous submission of

our professor. In any case, this sahih report is, apparently, an additional .strengthening mutaba'ah for the riwayah of Habib b. Abi Thabit

:Imam Ibn Abi Asim (d. ٢٨٧ H) here presents the seal of these athar

حدثنا أبو بكر بن أبى شيبه نا وكيع عن بسام عن أبى الطفيل عن على رضى الله عنه قال كان ذو القرنين عبدا صالحا نصح الله عز و جل فنصحه فضرب على قرنه الأيمن فمات فأحياه الله عز و جل ثم ضرب على قرنه الأيسر فمات فأحياه الله عز و جل وفيكم مثله

Abu Bakr b. Abi Shaybah – Waki' – Bassam – Abu al-Tufayl – 'Ali, may Allah be pleased :with him

Dhu al-Qarnayn was a righteous man. He sought the guidance of Allah the Almighty, and He guided him. So, he was struck on his right qarn, AND HE DIED. But, Allah the Almighty RESURRECTED him. Then, he was struck on his left qarn, AND HE DIED, and (Allah the Almighty RESURRECTED him (again). And among you is an example of him.(١

:Concerning the first narrator, al-Hafiz says

عبد الله بن محمد بن أبى شيبه إبراهيم بن عثمان الواسطى الأصل أبو بكر بن أبى شيبه الكوفى ثقه حافظ صاحب تصانيف

Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Abi Shaybah Ibrahim b. 'Uthman, of Wasiti origin, Abu Bakr (b. Abi Shaybah al-Kufi: Thiqah (trustworthy), a hadith scientist, author of books.(٢

:On the second narrator, he states as well

وكيع بن الجراح بن مليح الرؤاسى بضم الراء وهمزه ثم مهمله، أبو

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١ - - Abu Bakr Ahmad b. 'Amr b. Abi 'Asim al-Dhahhak al-Shaybani, al-Ahad wa al-Mathani (Riyadh: Dar al-Rayat; ١st edition, ١٤١١ H) [annotator: Dr. Basim Faysal Ahmad al-Jawabirah], vol. ١, p. ١٤١, ١٦٨

٢ - Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; ٢nd edition, ١٤١٥ H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. ١, p. ٥٢٨,

سفيان الكوفى ثقه حافظ عابد

Waki' b. al-Jarah b. Malih al-Ruwasi, Abu Sufyan al-Kufi: Thiqah (trustworthy), a hadith scientist, a devout worshipper of Allah.(۱)

And, about the last narrator, al-Hafiz submits:

بسام بن عبد الله الصيرفى الكوفى أبو الحسن صدوق

Bassam b. 'Abd Allah al-Sayrafi al-Kufi, Abu al-Hasan: Saduq (very truthful).(۲)

So, the isnad is hasan, due to Bassam, and the hadith itself is sahih on account of its mutaba'at and shawahid.

In the above athar, we read two interesting phrases:

وفيكم اليوم مثله.

And among you today is an example of him.

And:

وفيكم مثله

And among you is an example of him.

In simpler words, there was someone alive at that very moment who was an example of Dhu al-Qarnayn. That person too:

۱. was not a prophet, but a righteous, sincere servant loved by Allah;.

۲. sought the guidance of Allah and was guided by Him;

۳. though not a prophet, was "sent" by Allah to his people; and

۴. would be hit on the head and thereby killed, but would be resurrected by Allah and

.then hit on the head again and murdered a second time

Who was it? The answer is apparent, of course. If Allah were to send any non-prophet to the Ummah at that point in time, it would have been none other than Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, ‘alaihi al-salam. He was the best creature alive – in all good qualities, especially in terms of piety, knowledge and guidance - at that moment. Therefore, ‘Ali could not have been referring to anyone except to himself in those ,statements

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Ibid, vol. ۲, p. pp. ۲۸۳-۲۸۴, ۷۴۴۱ -۱

Ibid, vol. ۱, p. ۱۲۴, ۶۶۳ -۲

anyway. Besides, he was martyred by Ibn Muljam, la’natullah ‘alaihi, who struck him .on the head, like Dhu al-Qarnayn was. So, that too is a clear indication

Imam Ibn Salam (d. ۲۲۴ H), a grand ancient Sunni hadith linguist, has the same :conclusion as well

وإنما اخترت هذا التفسير على الأول لحديث عن على نفسه هو عندى مفسر له ولنا وذلك أنه ذكر ذا القرنين فقال: دعا قومه إلى عباده الله فضربوه على قرنيه ضربتين وفيكم مثله. فنرى أنه أراد بقوله هذا نفسه - يعنى أنى أدعو إلى الحق حتى أضرب على رأسى ضربتين يكون فيهما قتلى.

I have only chosen this explanation instead of the first due to a hadith from ‘Ali himself. It (the hadith), in my view, explains it to us. And that is, he (‘Ali) mentioned Dhu al-Qarnayn and said, “He called his people to the worship of Allah, and they struck him on his qarn twice. And among you is an example of him”. So, we see that he (‘Ali) was referring to himself with this statement of his – he meant: I will call to the Truth until I (will be struck on my head twice. My death will be in them.”(۱

:Imam Ibn al-Athir (d. ۶۰۶ H), a leading classical Sunni hadith linguist, also submits

ومنه حديث على وذكر قصه ذى القرنين ثم قال وفيكم مثله فيرى أنه إنما عنى نفسه لأنه ضرب على رأسه ضربتين إحداهما يوم الخندق والأخرى ضربه ابن ملجم

And from it is the hadith of 'Ali. He mentioned the story of Dhu al-Qarnayn, and

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١ - Abu 'Ubayd al-Qasim b. Salam al-Harwi, Gharib al-Hadith (Haydarabad: Majlis Dairah al-Ma'arif al-'Uthmaniyyah; ١st edition, ١٣٨٥ H), vol. ٣, p. ٨٠

then said: "And among you is an example of him." So, it is seen that he was only referring to himself because he was struck on his head twice: one of them on the Day of al-Khandaq and the other was the strike of Ibn Muljam.(١)

This explanation of Ibn al-Athir is slightly misleading. Dhu al-Qarnayn was given two fatal blows, which resulted in his deaths twice. Since 'Ali was an example of him, then he too would be fatally struck twice. The blow on the Day of al-Khandaq was NOT fatal. So, it is automatically ruled out. Amir al-Muminin was, of course, martyred by Ibn Muljam, who struck him on his head. But, he has not been resurrected by Allah yet – as He did with Dhu al-Qarnayn. Therefore, the incident will definitely happen in the future. 'Ali will come back, and will be fatally hit again on his death. He will die a second time, on the surface of this earth. Dhu al-Qarnayn was revived once more after the second death, and our mawla, 'Ali b. Abi Talib, will still "return" after his own second death as well.

Imam al-Nasafi (d. ٧١٠ H) has this comment about the words of 'Ali too:

وعن عليّ رضى الله عنه أنه قال : ليس بملك ولا نبى ولكن كان عبداً صالحاً ضرب على قرنه الأيمن فى طاعه الله فمات ثم بعثه الله فضرب على قرنه الأيسر فمات فبعثه الله فسمى ذا القرنين وفيكم مثله أراد نفسه

It is narrated that 'Ali, may Allah be pleased

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١ - Ibn al-Athir, Abu Sa'adat al-Mubarak b. Muhammad al-Jazari, al-Nihayah fi Gharib al-Hadith wa al-Athar (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; ١٣٩٩ H) [annotators: Tahir Ahmad al-Zawi and Mahmud Muhammad al-Tanahi], vol. ٤, p. ٥٢

with him, said (about Dhu al-Qarnayn): "He was neither an angel nor a prophet. But

with him, said (about Dhu al-Qarnayn): "He was neither an angel nor a prophet. But, he was a righteous servant. He was struck on his right qarn due to his obedience of Allah. So, he died. Then, Allah resurrected him. But, he was (again) strucked on his left qarn and he died. Then, Allah resurrected him (once more). As a result, he was named (Dhu al-Qarnayn. And there is an example of him among you." He meant himself.(١)

Meanwhile, there is a shahid from the Messenger of Allah, sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi, :for the words of Amir al-Muminin in the athar. Imam Ahmad (d. ٢۴١ H) records

حدثنا عبد الله حدثنی أبی ثنا عفان ثنا حماد بن سلمه ثنا محمد بن إسحاق عن محمد بن إبراهیم التیمی عن سلمه بن أبی الطفیل عن علی بن أبی طالب رضی الله عنه ان النبی صلی الله علیه و سلم قال له یا علی ان لک کنزا من الجنه وانک ذو قرنیها

Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – 'Affan – Hamad b. Salamah –' Muhammad b. Ishaq – Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Taymi – Salamah b. Abi al-Tufayl – :'Ali b. Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him

Verily, the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "O 'Ali! Surely, you are the owner of a (treasure in Paradise, and you are its Dhu al-Qarnayn."(٢)

:Shaykh al-Arnaut comments

حسن لغیره

(Hasan li ghayrihi(٣)

:Allamah al-Albani (d. ١۴٢٠ H) too says'

حسن لغیره

(Hasan li ghayrihi(۴)

:Imam al-Hakim (d. ۴٠٣ H) also documents

حدثنا أبو العباس محمد بن یعقوب ثنا الحسن بن

Abu al-Barakat ‘Abd Allah b. Ahmad b. Mahmud al-Nasafi, Tafsir al-Nasafi (Beirut: -١ Dar al-Nafais; ٢٠٠۵ CE) [annotator: Shaykh Marwan Muhammad al-Shi’ar], vol. ٣, p. ۴٠

Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) -٢ [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. ١, p. ١۵٩, ١٣٧٣

Ibid -٣

Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, Sahih al-Targhib wa al-Tarhib (Riyadh: - ۴ Maktabah al-Ma’arif; ۵th edition), vol. ٢, p. ١٨٩, ١٩٠٢

على بن عفان العامرى ثنا عبد الله بن نمير أخبرنا أحمد بن سهل الفقيه ببخارى ثنا أبو عصمه سهل بن المتوكل البخارى ثنا عفان وسليمان بن حرب قالا : ثنا حماد بن سلمه عن محمد بن إسحاق عن محمد بن إبراهيم التيمى عن سلمه بن أبى الطفيل أظنه عن أبيه عن على رضى الله عنه قال قال لى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يا على إن لك كنزا فى الجنه وإنك ذو قرنيها

Abu al-‘Abbas Muhammad b. Ya’qub – al-Hasan b. ‘Ali b. ‘Affan al-‘Amiri – ‘Abd Allah b. Numayr – Ahmad b. Sahl al-Faqih – Abu ‘Ismah Sahl b. al-Mutawakil al-Bukhari – ‘Affan and Sulayman b. Harb – Hammad b. Salamah – Muhammad b. Ishaq – Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Taymi – Salamah b. Abi al-Tufayl – perhaps his father – ‘Ali, :may Allah be pleased with him

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said to me: “O ‘Ali! Verily, you are the (owner of a treasure in Paradise, and you are its Dhu al-Qarnayn.”(١

:Al-Hakim declares

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

(This hadith has a sahih chain.(٢

:And Imam al-Dhahabi (d. ٧۴٨ H) agrees with him

صحيح

(Sahih(٣

So, what does this hadith mean, especially the last part? The determining factor is the its Dhu al-Qarnayn”]. To what does it refer. On the apparent, it“] (قرنيها) its”] in“] (ها) Paradise”] mentioned earlier in the hadith, especially since it also has“] (الجنه) refers to

a feminine grammar. If it is a reference to Paradise, then Amir al-Muminin will be its .Dhu al-Qarnayn, and that is, its emperor

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Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak 'ala -۱ al-Sahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; ۱st edition, ۱۴۱۱ H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. ۳, p. ۱۳۳, ۴۶۲۳

Ibid -۲

Ibid -۳

This is because the comparison then would be about kingdom, as opposed to personal merits or qualities. Dhu al-Qarnayn was the emperor of the earth during his lifetime, :as the Qur'an testifies

ويسألونک عن ذى القرنين قل سأتلو عليكم منه ذكرا إنا مكنا له فى الأرض وآتيناه من كل شىء سببا

And they ask you about Dhu al-Qarnayn. Say: "I shall recite to you something of his story: 'Verily, We established him over the earth, and We gave him the means of (everything.'"(۱

Therefore, if Imam 'Ali is the Dhu al-Qarnayn of Paradise, then he will be its emperor. Allah will establish him over Paradise, and will give him the means of everything there. This, indeed, is an extremely great virtue of Amir al-Muminin. He will be the emperor over all the awliya, prophets, messengers and Imams except his own master, Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah – who naturally will be the Grand Emperor. Some scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah agree on this too. However, the stronger opinion among them is that Imam 'Ali is the Dhu al-Qarnayn of this Ummah only, according to the hadith. :Imam Ibn Salam for instance states about the riwayah

قـد كان بعض أهل العلم يتأول هـذا الحـديث أنه ذو قرنى الجنه - يريد طرفيها، وإنما يأول ذلك لذكره الجنه فى أول الحديث، وأما أنا فلا أحسبه أراد ذلک - والله أعلم، ولكنه أراد إنک ذو قرنى هذه الأمه، فأضمر الأمه

One of the people of knowledge interpreted this hadith to mean that he ('Ali) will be

the Dhu

۱- Qur'an ۱۸:۸۳-۸۴

al-Qarnayn of Paradise – intending its entire territories, and he made this interpretation only because of the mention of Paradise at the beginning of the hadith. As for me, I do not think that he (the Prophet) intended that, and Allah knows best. Rather, he (the Prophet) intended that "You are the Dhu al-Qarnayn of this Ummah", and thereby pronounised the Ummah.(۱)

Since the lifetime of the Ummah has exceeded that of 'Ali and his rule for more a millennium, obviously this alternative interpretation cannot be about political authority. He is the only Dhu al-Qarnayn of this Ummah, but not its only ruler. As such, the comparison between 'Ali and Dhu al-Qarnayn – as far as our Ummah is concerned - is apparently about their shared personal merits and qualities, and not about their political histories. Imam al-Mundhiri (d. ۶۵۶ H) gives some further explanation:

قول صلى الله عليه و سلم لعلى وإنك ذو قرنيها أى ذو قرنى هـذه الأمه وذاك لأنه كان له شجتان فى قرنى رأسه إحداهما من ابن ملجم لعنه الله والأخرى من عمرو بن ود

His statement, peace be upon him, to 'Ali "and you are its Dhu al-Qarnayn", that is, the Dhu al-Qarnayn of this Ummah. And this is because he had two head wounds on the two qarns of his head: the first of them from Ibn Muljam, may Allah curse him, and the other from 'Amr b. Wudd.(۲)

Ali Shiri, the annotator of Tarikh Madinah Dimashq, quotes a similar exegesis for the 'hadith:

جاء فى الفائق للزمخشرى ۳/۱۷۳

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۱ - Abu 'Ubayd al-Qasim b. Salam al-Harwi, Gharib al-Hadith (Haydarabad: Majlis

Dairah al-Ma'arif al-'Uthmaniyyah; ١st edition, ١٣٨٥ H), vol. ٣, pp. ٧٨-٧٩

٢- Abu Muhammad 'Abd al-'Azim b. 'Abd al-Qawi al-Mundhiri, al-Targhib wa al-Tarhib (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; ١st edition, ١٤١٧ H) [annotator: Ibrahim Shams al-Din], vol. ٣, p. ٢٤

فى ماده قرن): قال صلى الله عليه وسلم لعلى رضى الله عنه: إن ذلک بيتا فى الجنه وإنک لذو قرنيها (الضمير للأمه وتفسيره فيما يروى عن على رضى الله عنه: إنه ذکر ذا القرنين فقال: دعا قومه إلى عباده الله فضربوه على قرنيه ضربتين وفيکم مثله يعنى نفسه الطاهره لأنه ضرب على رأسه ضربتين: إحداهما يوم الخندق والثانيه ضربه ابن ملجم.

It is in al-Faiq of al-Zamakhshari ٣/١٧٣ under the entry "Qarn":

(He, peace be upon him, said to 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him: "Verily, that is a house in Paradise, and you are its Dhu al-Qarnayn". The pronoun (i.e. "its") refers to the Ummah and its explanation is in what it narrated from 'Ali, may Allaah be pleased with him, that he mentioned Dhu al-Qarnayn and said, "He called his people to the worship of Allah, and they struck him on his qarn twice, and among you is an example of him", he meant his pure self, because he was struck on his head twice: one of them on the Day of Khandaq and the second, the strike of Ibn Muljam.(١)

This escapist diversion, however, does not help either. Dhu al-Qarnayn was so named because he received two fatal blows to his head. Amir al-Muminin is his example in this Ummah, and our own Dhu al-Qarnayn. Therefore, the non-fatal strikes on 'Ali's head do not count in the comparison. He too must receive two fatal blows to his head. We know as a fact that he already was

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١- Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. al-Hasan b. Habat Allah b. 'Abd Allah, Ibn Asakir al-Shafi'i, Tarikh Madinah Dimashq (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; ١st edition, ١٤١٧ H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. ٤٣, p. ٣٢٤, footnote ٤

fatally struck by Ibn Muljam. We now await his raj'ah, and a second fatal blow to his head. After his second death, he is expected to resurrect again, and then die, perhaps naturally.

So, Amir al-Muminin is not coming back to this earth only once in the future, but actually twice; and he will die three times before the end of the world – like Dhu al-Qarnayn. This was ‘Ali’s own belief about himself.

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?Are those who know equal to those who do not know
al-Zumar: 9

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We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow.

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